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THE WORKS

OF THE

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ANTIPÆDOBAPTISM EXAMINED;

OR,

A STRICT AND IMPARTIAL INQUIRY INTO THE NATURE AND DESIGN, SUBJECTS AND MODE OF BAPTISM.

INCLUDING, ALSO,

AN INVESTIGATION OF THE NATURE OF POSITIVE INSTITUTIONS IN GENERAL, AND OCCASIONAL STRICTURES ON HUMAN CEREMONIES IN MATTERS OF RELIGION.

CONTAINING, IN PARTICULAR, A FULL REPLY TO

MR BOOTH'S PÆDOBAPTISM EXAMINED.

"When I had waited, . . . I said, I will answer also my part, I also will shew mine opinion."—ELIHU.

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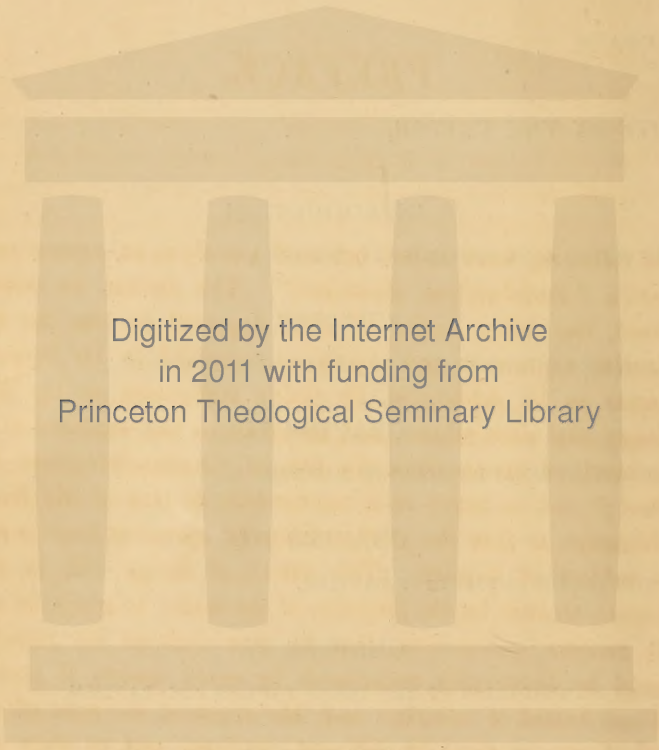

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PREFACE.

THE following work is not intended *merely* as an answer to Mr Booth's "Pædobaptism Examined." The author, as occasion offered, has taken notice of what appeared to him the most plausible arguments and objections contained in Dr Stennett's Answer to Dr Addington, Dr Gale's Reflections on Dr Wall's History, and some others; and, therefore, he has ventured to give the result of his inquiries the title of "Antipædobaptism Examined;" not so much as a counter-title to that of Mr Booth's publication, as that the *Antipædobaptist system* at large is made the subject of inquiry. This extent of design will, in some measure, account for the largeness of the work; to which he must add another reason—viz., that he was desirous his principles should be thoroughly understood by every reader, if possible, without hazard of mistake: and this appeared the most effectual method—to set them in different positions, and to shew their connexion with the several branches of dispute, and their genuine practical tendency. Whence arises, eventually, a double advantage to the inquisitive reader: he not only must needs perceive clearly what the principles are; but also has an opportunity to judge of their *truth*, by observing the universality of their application.

At different intervals of relaxation from more important engagements, the subject of these volumes had attracted the author's

attention for some years; but he did not resolve to write and publish, till some time after Mr Booth's "Pædobaptism Examined" made its appearance. Nor was it his design, when he began to write, to handle the several branches of controversy in so extensive a manner; but, in his progress, the more he considered his leading ideas, in their various application to the different parts, the more he was induced to extend his plan.

When he read Mr Booth's preface to the *second edition* of his work, which came out after the former part of his was sent into the press, his curiosity was not a little gratified with the following paragraph:—"Should this examination of Pædobaptism have the honour of being regarded as deserving an answer, and should any of our opposers write against me, it will not avail to refute some particular parts of the work, detached from the general principles on which I proceed. No; the *data*, the *principal grounds* of reasoning, which are adopted from Pædobaptists themselves, must be constantly kept in view; or nothing to the honour of infant sprinkling will be effected. For as the grand principles on which my argumentation proceeds, and whence my general conclusions are drawn, are those of Protestants when contending with Papists, and those of Nonconformists when disputing with English Episcopalians, it will be incumbent on such opposer to shew, either that the *principles themselves are false*, or that my *reasoning upon them is inconclusive*. Now, as I do not perceive how any Protestant can give up those principles without virtually admitting the superstitions of Popery; nor how they can be deserted by any Dissenter without implicitly renouncing his Nonconformity; so I conclude, that the whole force of any opponent must be employed in endeavouring to prove that I have reasoned inconsequentially from those principles. That this might be easily proved, I am not at present convinced: and whether any of our Pædobaptist brethren will consider this publication as of sufficient importance to excite such an attempt, is to me uncertain."*

The data, the principal grounds of reasoning, must be kept in view. Well, he reflected, here is his task fairly pointed out; and

* Pages 19, 20.

he is not a little pleased to observe, that what is here prescribed is precisely the same as what he had from the first imposed upon himself; that is, not to nibble at some of the branches of his stately tree, but to lay the axe of opposite principles to the root of it,—not to uncover a little here and there of his building, to find a few faults in quotations, translations, and the like, but to undermine the foundation. The *principal grounds* of reasoning he has endeavoured constantly to keep in view; and his aim is throughout to shew that the *principles* of Protestants and Nonconformists, taken in their only true sense and force, are either misunderstood or *misrepresented* by his opponents, and consequently their reasoning upon them, which derives all its plausibility from that misrepresentation, is *inconclusive*. Their conduct in applying their maxims to their cause, may be compared to that of a judge who should produce from the best writers definitions of justice in the abstract, and then arbitrarily tack these to any cause, right or wrong, according to his humour. But will such an arbitrary application of a definition, formed abstractedly, make a cause more or less just in itself? Should not the circumstances of the point in litigation be first attended to, and the facts be accurately ascertained, in order to infer the *quantum* of justice or injustice in the whole aggregate? So far were the most eminent of the Protestants and Nonconformists from discarding the use of right reason and Scripture analogy in their investigations of gospel worship and institutions, that sometimes they were not a little offended with insinuations to the contrary. The following words of Dr John Owen may be fairly deemed a proper specimen of their thoughts upon the matter:—"I have of late been much surprised with the plea of some for the *use of reason* in religion and sacred things—not at all that such a *plea is insisted* on, but that it is by them built expressly on a supposition that it is by others, whom they reflect upon, *denied;* whereas some, probably intended in those reflections, have pleaded for it *against the Papists* (to speak within the bounds of sobriety) with as much reason, and no less effectually, than any amongst themselves."*

* On the Sabbath, Exercit. i., § 8.

In fact, the Christian Church has been shamefully abused by extravagant opinions and superstitious ceremonies, which may well raise the indignation of a mind in love with the sacred authority of Scripture and rational devotion; and this has occasioned some, in the height of their antipathy and pious zeal, to fly into the opposite extreme of adhering to the *mere letter* of Divine laws, to the neglect of their *true spirit.* But this is not all; what was designed as a preventive to the former disease, becomes itself, in common with it, the occasion (or, shall he say, the culpable cause?) of a malady far more dangerous. "Among other prejudices," says a shrewd observer, who, hiding himself behind the scene, attentively watched their motions,—"among other prejudices, there is one of a particular nature, which you must have observed to be one of the greatest causes of modern irreligion. Whilst some *opinions and rites* are carried to such an *immoderate height* as exposes the absurdity of them to the view of almost everybody but them who raise them, not only gentlemen of the *belles lettres,* but even men of common sense many times see through them; and then out of indignation and an excessive penitence, not *separating* that which is true from that which is false, they come to deny both, and fall back into the contrary extreme, a contempt of all religion in general."*

He should be very sorry if what is advanced in the following Examination should in any measure violate the sacred bond of Christian charity and friendship that subsists between him and, in this instance, his differing brethren; with several of whom he wishes to preserve and cultivate a fraternal affection. And those of them who bear the ministerial character, with whom he agrees in weightier points of evangelical truth, are welcome to his pulpit, his house, and his heart; and none would be more so, according to his present views, than the author of the "Reign of Grace," and "Pædobaptism Examined."

He now submits the performance to the impartial judgment of the candid public, and implores the blessing of God on every grain of truth contained in it, for the reader's real benefit;

* Wollaston, Religion of Nature, pp. 60, 61, Edit. 1725.

earnestly wishing that evangelical knowledge may increase, and that all our acquaintance with God's word, covenant, institutions, and all the means of grace, may be reduced to experience and useful practice; to the glory of God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. *Amen.*

Oswestry, *December* 9, 1788.

INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

THE doctrine of baptisms has been for centuries the theme of irritating controversy. The discussion has often been conducted with great learning as well as with much earnestness, and yet only one branch of the general subject seems to be exhausted—its philology. There is little hope of procuring any materials of much value additional to those we now possess. Although these are before the Church and the learned in their completeness, there is at present no indication of a general agreement as to the exact kind of structure which they are best fitted, or which they were designed, to build. The theories of all who practise the rite at all are, however, substantially only three; each admitting of some modifications:—

1. The theory that may conveniently be placed first is that which maintains that baptism, when administered according to its requirements—which cannot here be even stated—is the means of effecting a true, real change in the subject; that is, it is the means of *regeneration;* that is, of the *παλιγγενεσία* of the old commentators, the *γεννηθῆναι ἄνωθεν* of John, and the *καινὴ κτίσις* of Paul. This is the view of the Church of Rome, and that which is generally held by those persons called High Churchmen in other communions. Of this specific inevitable result, baptism in their

hands is the unfailing instrument. This scheme is very compact ; and to those who can and do believe it, no doubt it is very consolatory. In the judgment of multitudes, however, the facts of every-day life, common sense, and the teaching of Sacred Scripture properly interpreted, not by *subsequent* ecclesiastical controversies and corruptions, are diametrically opposed to its claims. On this triple ground it is rejected.

2. The second theory is that which makes baptism, not the means of any change whatever, but the *symbol* of a change already effected by the Spirit of God, and the representative rite of a holy life already commenced. Without evidence of the fact of the renewal of the Holy Ghost, the ordinance, according to its fundamental principle, ought not to be administered. In the absence of that change, it would be the symbol of what did not exist, and its administration would be, therefore, contrary to the theory,—that is, contrary to what it regards as an essential part of the Divine warrant for its administration. The evidence in such a case is the testimony of the subject—sustained by a godly life—who in the nature of things must be an adult. Infants *must* be excluded by it, because incapable of giving any testimony respecting the state of their heart. Those who adopt this theory generally practise *immersion*. This *mode* of observing the rite and the theory do not seem to have any necessary connexion : hence there are exceptions.

This second theory of baptism differs essentially from the first. Both, however, make it the only true entrance, but in a different way, into the visible Church of Christ. To it, on this ground, many entertain strong objections.

Again ; as on this scheme evidence of conversion is essential to the correct administration of the rite, it follows, if proof should be afterwards supplied that conversion had not taken place in any given case where baptism had been administered, that the baptism of such a person could not have been valid, as it would in that instance be the symbol of what did not exist—a renewed nature. On the supposition of conversion taking place afterwards, or what

after due care, examination, and prayer, was believed to be such, the theory would require re-baptism. But as the testimony and the evidence, the second time, *might* prove false, it is possible enough to conceive of a case in which on the theory *re-baptism* ought to be repeated. The scheme, pushed in this direction, wears very much the appearance of a piece of absurdity, and yet, right or wrong, in the judgment of many, such are its logical results. By them it is therefore rejected.

Further; the requisite warrant for its administration is two-fold—the commission of our Lord, and the testimony of the sub_ject. This combination of what is so uncertain as human testimony with the sacred commission, as the complex foundation of this baptismal scheme, has, with other considerations, led many to adopt a theory differing widely from both the preceding. Hence—

3. The third scheme is that which maintains that baptism is neither the instrument of producing any spiritual change whatever, nor yet the symbol of a change already effected, but *the appointed ritual means of setting forth what ought*, according to the will of Christ, to be found in every man's heart, whether in fact there or not—a spiritual life; and of setting forth the agency by which depraved human nature can be renewed, and the Divine life sustained. According to this view, baptism ought to have for its foundation only the appointment and command of the Lord. It requires no condition like the preceding for its proper administration. It rests on the command alone. Being the symbol, not of what has necessarily been effected, but of what ought at any rate to exist, as an ordinance of Christianity, it is rightly administered to those who receive it, whether they are, like baptized Simon, in the gall of bitterness, and in the bonds of iniquity, or have, like the eunuch, believed with all their hearts. It stands, according to this scheme, on the same basis as the public proclamation of the gospel. The one is teaching evangelical truth by an act, the other by the living voice. On this theory, the *whole* commission of the Lord may be carried out *before* conversion—*without* securing it, as it was in the instance of Simon—as well as

after this gracious change has been effected. It appears to those who adopt it, on many grounds, that infants come naturally within its scope, as conversion is not one of its necessary prerequisites—as naturally, at least, as infants came within the range of circumcision in the dispensation of Judaism. In this way, it seems to them to embody all the facts of Scripture, to meet all the inevitable requirements of its teaching, and to set aside the objections to which the preceding theories are exposed.

With regard to this contested subject, it appears most desirable to classify, and then to reduce, the various schemes that have been advocated and are maintained to some general principles fundamental to each—if not in the way which the preceding paragraphs suggest, in some other form. May some one who has the requisite abilities, learning, and leisure, undertake the task; and so aid future students—for the subject must be studied in time to come, as it has been in the past—in investigating it for themselves!

A modified form—modified in various ways—of the last theory is the one advocated in the following valuable treatise. No estimate, however, of its excellencies or defects will be attempted here, —the reader will do that for himself,—beyond observing that, though one of the earliest of Dr Williams's writings, it exhibits most of the characteristics of his works in after life. It abounds in comprehensive views on the subject in debate, and on those collaterally connected with it. He lays down with great clearness the principles which, in his judgment, were fundamental to the discussion, and points out, with the utmost perspicuity, how these principles lead to the conclusions at which he arrives. At the time of its publication, it excited, therefore, no small amount of attention, as well from those who in the main coincided in his views as from those who rejected them.

In the Appendix, Dr Williams refers to notes on the subject of this treatise, and quotes an extract or two from them, which he thought right to insert in a new edition, improved and abridged, which he issued, of the Rev. Matthias Morrice's "Social Religion Exemplified." It will be observed, the Rev. A. Booth strongly animadverted upon them; and so gave no inconsiderable pub-

licity to them. It seems, therefore, but right that they should be inserted here without abridgment:—

"1. That *baptism* was administered to infants in the apostolic age, is pleaded from Scripture *examples* and *precepts*. For the *former* are urged—Acts xvi. 15, '*Lydia* was baptized, *and her household;*' Acts xvi. 33, 'The jailer was baptized, *and all his*, straightway;' 1 Cor. i. 16, 'I baptized also *the household of Stephanas;*'—and for the *latter*—Acts ii. 38, 39, 'Be baptized *every one of you, you and your children.*' The reason why you *parents* should be baptized is, BECAUSE the *promise* is to you; but the promise is to your *children* also, and THEREFORE *they* should be baptized.

"2. That baptism was administered by the *application* or sprinkling of water, and not by plunging, is maintained from Acts ix. 9, 18, 19, '*Paul* was *three days* . . . . and neither did *eat nor drink*, ... and was *baptized;* . . . . and when he had received meat, he was *strengthened.*' His sore condition of body and mind makes it highly improbable that he was *immersed*. Also, Acts xvi. 33, 'The jailer washed *the stripes* of *Paul* and *Silas*, and *he was baptized*, and all his, *straightway.*'

"3. As to Scripture *phrases* and *expressions*, as they relate to the mode of baptism,—such as *in Jordan, into* the water, *out of* the water, *buried* in baptism, *John* baptizing in *Ænon, because there was much water there*,—it is replied, that all means no more than *at Jordan, to* the water, *from* the water with *Christ* in the baptism of His sufferings, and *John* choosing to preach and baptize in a country, where the multitudes and their beasts might be refreshed. The word *baptizo*, it is remarked, is so far from signifying nothing but dipping or plunging, that, on the contrary, there are *many* places in the New Testament where we are under an absolute necessity to understand *pouring* or *sprinkling* by it; and that there is *never* a place in the Scripture where it does necessarily signify plunging or dipping. Mark vii. 4, 'And when they come from the market, except they wash, [Greek, *baptize*,] they eat not.' 'The washing [Greek, *baptizing*] of cups and pots, brazen vessels and tables.' 1 Cor. x. 1, 2, 'All our fathers were under *the cloud*, ... and were all *baptized.*' Heb. ix. 10, 'Diverse washings, [Greek,] *baptisms.*'

"4. The *ground* of infants' *right* to baptism is somewhat *singular*. Interest in the promise gives a right to baptism *the children of all the called have a right to the promise*. But this *absolute connexion* between a *natural* descent from godly parents, and an interest in the *spiritual* eternal covenant, is liable to many *weighty objections.*

"In reviewing this subject, which has of late especially engaged the attention of the public, and the pens of able writers, I perceive that the champions on the *one* side are by no means agreed upon this question, *On what is the* RIGHT *of infants to baptism founded?* And those on the *other* know very well how to avail themselves of the fact. The Pædobaptists generally, in defending their cause, content themselves with urging a *variety* of topics which *separately* considered appear to have but little weight; whereas taken in their *collective* force, they seem to amount to a conclusive argument, and a sufficient apology for their practice. Their opponents are aware of this, and immediately seize their bundle of arrows; and taking them one by one, they *break* some and *bend* others, triumphing in the success.

"For my own part, should any ask me why, as a Christian minister, I baptize an infant? I can truly answer that I have the very *same reason* for doing it that John the Baptist had for baptizing *penitent* sinners, in Jordan and Ænon; the *same reason* that Jesus, by the ministry of His disciples, had for baptizing a still greater multitude; and, finally, the *same reason* that our Baptist brethren have, or *ought* to have, and which they *profess* to have in the general tenor of their *practice*, for baptizing adults. But this is not a place to enter into particulars. At present,—without derogating from the due force of those arguments commonly adduced,—I shall content myself with the following reremarks:—

"1. Whatever there may be in the ordinance of baptism of a *positive* consideration, there is nothing relative to the *subjects* of it so *merely* positive as to be independent on all *moral* grounds; nay, further, whatever relates to the qualifications of the subjects is of a nature *entirely* moral, and to say otherwise must imply a *contradiction*. Baptism, therefore, is an ordinance of a *mixed nature*, partly positive and partly moral.

"2. As far as this, or any such ordinance, partakes of a *moral* nature, the *reason* and design of the law, or, if you please, the *spirit* of it, is our rule of duty; and *only* so far as it partakes of a *positive* nature is the *letter* of the law our rule.

"3. As what relates to the *qualifications* of the subjects is of *moral* consideration, we are necessitated to seek in them the *reason* and *intention* of the command; but infants, partaking of the great *primary* qualification, which the *evident design* of the ordinance requires, *ought* to be baptized; and it must imply breach of duty in a minister to decline it.

"To argue on this principle—'Baptism IS a positive right, and therefore OUGHT to be express, full, and circumstantial'—is, on the principles, concessions, and practice of Antipædobaptists, demonstrably *fallacious*. For, the law of baptism is evidently, in

fact, not circumstantial and determinate, and therefore is not, cannot be an institution *entirely* positive. See Mr Booth's 'Pædobaptism Examined,' (p. 11, *et passim*,) a work lately published, which discovers a considerable degree of *good temper*, ingenuity, labour, and erudition; but, if I mistake not, a great part, if not the whole fabric, of which rests on the above *indefensible* hypothesis.

"Whether the text in Matthew, 'Go, teach all nations, baptizing them,' &c., (chap. xxviii. 19,) has any reference to that in Isaiah, 'So shall he sprinkle many nations,' &c., (chap. lii. 15,) in the sense here intended, [viz., the former, the faithful performance of gracious promises, especially of the latter, which was Mr Morrice's view,] I shall leave to the judgment of the judicious reader; but as to the *mode* of baptism, (though Mr Morrice went so far as to contend that immersion was *never* used in the apostolic age,) it should seem an equitable rule, that, as the most eminent critics, commentators, and lexicographers are divided in their verdict respecting the acceptation of the term *baptizo*, and consequently the intention of our Saviour's command *to baptize;* and as the *practice* of the disciples, whence we should [be able to] gather in what sense they *understood* it, is attended with considerable difficulty when reduced to any one *invariable* method,—we should vary it according to circumstances, and, in proportion as demonstrable evidence is wanting, refer the mode to the *private judgment* of the person or persons concerned. Hereby ministers would discover a liberal impartiality, and shew that they are ever willing to embrace superior evidence."

Whenever the history of the baptismal controversy in this country shall be written, this work and the treatise of the Rev. A. Booth shall have assigned to them no mean place or prominence. Both are worthy of open-minded, thoughtful, and comprehensive study on the part of those who are seeking to know what to believe, what to teach, and what to practice on their subject.—Ed.

ANTIPÆDOBAPTISM EXAMINED.

INTRODUCTION,

CONTAINING SOME PRELIMINARY REMARKS.

§ 1. The importance of the subject. § 2. The advantages of a strict and impartial inquiry into it. § 3. Preliminary remarks. § 4. (First,) Of the kind of evidence required in this debate. § 5. (Second,) Concerning the main hinge of the controversy. § 6. (Third,) Of defining and explaining the principal terms. § 7. (Fourth,) Of human authority and opinion.

§ 1. THAT the subject investigated in the following pages is of a nature considerably important, will hardly be questioned by any who reflect, that *no person* professing Christianity can lawfully exempt himself from paying it at least a practical attention; for, if he imagine (as the Quakers and some of the followers of Socinus do) that he is under no obligation to espouse the practice of water baptism, as a *standing ordinance* in the Christian Church, surely he ought to have substantial reasons for that determination, or else must incur the censure of precipitate rashness and irreligion. It concerns him impartially to judge, whether or not the arguments adduced in favour of this Christian practice be of *superior force* to those insisted on to justify an absolute neglect of it. If the ordinance be from heaven, a law once enacted by the Great Head of the Church, is our evidence for its repeal stronger than any we have for its continuance? If not, the neglect must be highly criminal, as implying an impeachment of the Divine wisdom and

a contempt of the Divine authority.* But if it be an evident truth that this ordinance is of *perpetual obligation,* no sincere Christian can hesitate a moment from inferring, that it is of some importance to know how he may *best* discharge any duty that relates to it. To say, that it is of no consequence *who* is baptized, or immaterial *how* the rite is to be performed, *without due examination,* is incompatible with Christian sincerity. Whatever bears the stamp of Divine authority, has an undisputed claim on our reverential regards. I may further add: the consideration of its frequent occurrence,—that most gospel ministers have reiterated calls to determine about the subjects and circumstances of it,—that there are innumerable families who have repeated occasions to decide upon the case,—and, in a word, that no parent of a living child, in the whole Christian world, ought to reckon this ordinance as a matter of mere indifference;—these considerations, I say, and others that might be mentioned, are concurring reasons at once to justify a strict and impartial inquiry into this controverted subject, and thereby an attempt to ascertain its comparative importance.

Thus far, therefore, I have the pleasure to agree with the respectable author whose publication I more professedly examine, when he says, "Some persons affect to represent all disputes about the mode and subjects of baptism as not only stale and unimportant, but as unworthy the character of any who profess a warm regard for the person, the atonement, and the grace of Jesus Christ. It must, indeed, be acknowledged, that church order, positive rites, and external forms of worship, are not of *equal* importance with those doctrines which immediately respect the object of our worship, as rational creatures; the ground of our hope, as criminals deserving to perish; or the source of our blessedness, as intended for an immortal existence. But is this a sufficient reason for treating the law of baptism as if it were of little or no importance, as if

* The notion, "that this institution doth not extend to the descendants of professing Christians, being neither suitable to their circumstances, nor intended to bind them," is justly styled, by a gentleman who has lately published on the subject, a *new idea* concerning baptism, as appropriate to *present times;* which he refutes by shewing that there is nothing in the nature of any particular *command,* or any *circumstance* in the injunction, that renders it peculiarly proper, or any ways limits it to the persons and times then present, or which immediately succeeded; and that there is nothing in the rite of baptism, in its meaning and *design,* that indicates its being founded on *partial* considerations. See Toulmin's Essay on Baptism, *passim.*

it were *obsolete*, or as if our Great Legislator had *no meaning* when He enacted it? Are we not required to 'contend earnestly,' but with virtuous dispositions, 'for' every branch of 'that faith which was once delivered to the saints?' If, therefore, infants be solemnly sprinkled by Divine right, it must be the *indispensable duty* of Pædobaptists to contend for it,"* especially when *attacked*. To this I would add, if the baptizing of infants be *at all* a duty, it *must* be an *important* one, for it is to be observed, as Bishop Butler has done before, "that all Christians are commanded to contribute, by their profession of Christianity, to preserve it in the world; for it is the very scheme of the gospel that each Christian should, in his degree, contribute towards continuing and carrying it on; all by uniting in the public profession and external practice of Christianity;"† which cannot properly be done without duly attending to the introductory rite to such a profession.

§ 2. A fair investigation of the subject before us, in its full extent, and the *general principles* on which the weight of the controversy depends, may be attended also with some considerable advantages. A liberal, yet modest, inquiry after truth, especially in matters of duty and practice, cannot fail of being immediately advantageous to the inquirer, and, when attended with success, must be greatly beneficial in its consequences. For, to discover truth, and the *evidence* of truth, must needs afford more substantial profit, and a more generous pleasure, than can be expected in the mazes of falsehood and error, ignorance and prejudice. We may rest assured that the valuable gem, *truth*, will lose nothing of its lustre or worth by a thorough examination. If what has appeared to us in the semblance of a precious jewel, turn out on a closer search to be no better than a worthless pebble, it must be weak and preposterous still to retain and prize it as most valuable. But if long esteemed as of real worth, and pronounced genuine by many able judges, proportionable caution is necessary; we should turn and view it on every side, avail ourselves of the best light, and every proper advantage, lest, gulled by the artful, ourselves and our families sustain an important loss. If Pædobaptism be in reality what its opposers of the present day pronounce it to be, namely, "*absurd* and *unscriptural*,"‡ to resign

* Mr Booth's Pædobaptism Examined. Preface, p. 7.
† Butler's Analogy, part ii., chap. i., p. 219, 2d edit.
‡ Stennet's Answer to Addington, p. 234.

it will be no loss, but real gain. But if it be of God, it is a *truth;* and if it be a truth, there is *attainable evidence* of its being so; for, I confess, I have no high opinion of what Mr B. calls a wonderful secret—*truth without evidence*—though it were discovered by a right reverend prelate.* But I would not have Mr B. be transported with joy at the idea of his possessing "greatly preponderating evidence on his side," till he has better justified the *principles* on which he argues, lest while he is endeavouring to demolish the labours of others, and pleased, "greatly pleased," with the thought, his own foundation be undermined. Nor would

* Bishop Taylor's Liberty of Prophesying. This prelate, whom Mr B. so often quotes, wrote the treatise here referred to in the times of the Rebellion in England; in which he undertakes to shew, with a view to moderate the rigour of the parliamentarian party, *how much* might be said of two sorts of Dissenters, the Antipædobaptists and the Papists. And in his plea for the former, though he there declares himself well satisfied with the principles of Pædobaptism, of which he gives a summary account, and says that he takes the other opinion to be an *error;* yet, under pretence of reciting what may be said for this error, he draws up so elaborate a system of arguments against infant baptism, and sets them forth to such advantage, that he is judged to have said more for the Antipædobaptists than they were ever able before to say for themselves. And Dr Hammond says, (Six Queries, Infant Baptism, § 49,) it is the most diligent collection and the most exact scheme of the arguments against infant baptism that he had ever met with. Therefore the Doctor wrote an answer to this piece, solving each objection particularly; towards the conclusion of which (§ 139) he observes :—"I have passed through all the several heads of arguments that are here proposed, and considered them as nicely as I could, so as not to let fall one word that seemed to me to have any show of validity in it, or in the consequence of it, and must consent to the truth of the author's [the Bishop's] observations, 'that the Anabaptists have been encouraged in their error more by the accidental advantages given them by the weakness of those arguments that have been brought against them, than by any truth of their cause.'" And afterwards Bishop Taylor himself, having premised that he was sorry if any one had been so weak as to be misled by such objections, and that he counted it great condescension in Dr Hammond to bestow an answer on them, wrote also his own answers to his own objections, and inserted them in a later edition of the said treatise. (See Wall's History of Infant Baptism, part ii., chap. ii., § 6.) After all, though there be nothing which we can pronounce to be truth without suitable evidence, yet in a qualified sense I question whether the Bishop's remark, "I think there is so much to be pretended against that [Pædobaptism] which I believe to be the truth, that there is much more *truth* than *evidence* on our side," deserves all that severity of satire which Mr B. bestows on it. For by *evidence*, I presume, he intends a particular *kind* of evidence, an *express* command, *totidem verbis*, or demonstrable scriptural example: and by *truth*, a conclusion fairly drawn from *other* premises. Nor will Mr B. deny, that there are many things of a religious nature demonstrably *true*, or in matters of practice absolute *duty*, the *evidence* whereof does not arise from express revelation. Whether this remark will apply to the subject in question, will be further examined.

I have him to be so "greatly discouraged," as he professes to be, in respect of an issue to the present controversy, while he thinks that the Baptists *alone* "will plead preponderating evidence, and firmly insist upon it as a maxim of logical prudence, that our *assent* should always be proportioned to the *degree of evidence.*" Let not this discourage him; surely the Pædobaptists will think better of it than to reject so excellent a rule in pleading their cause. For my own part I have the pleasure to assure him, that I feel no reluctance at all to appeal, on every occasion, to so equitable a maxim, be the consequence what it may. "Nor have I any apprehension," to borrow the words of an opposite writer, "that this trial will at all injure the cause I am defending; on the contrary, I am well persuaded it will serve it. It is the part of error, not of truth, to elude inquiry: and he who would establish a point in debate, if he is satisfied of the goodness of his cause, will know how even to avail himself of the objections of his opponents. Truth is always perfectly consistent with itself: and however collateral circumstances may be so disguised, or placed in such a point of light by skilful management, as, for a time, to weaken and confound the plainest evidence of a real fact; yet, when those circumstances come to be thoroughly looked into, they will not only cease to have their effect, but will corroborate and brighten that evidence to which they before proved so unfriendly." *

§ 3. It is no uncommon thing in controversial matters for the contending parties to misunderstand one another on their first setting out: either some ambiguous terms are not explained, on which, notwithstanding, considerable stress is laid; or something is much insisted on which has only a remote reference, but is far from being essential, to the subject in hand; or a multitude of arguments are produced in proof of a point, when most, if not all, would have not the least plausibility but from begging the question in debate. This method may, indeed, dazzle and confound the weak, but is ill calculated to convince the judicious. This being the case, and perhaps never more so than in disputes about baptism, it may be proper to make a few *Preliminary Remarks.*

§ 4. (First,) I begin, then, with a pertinent observation of an ingenious Antipædobaptist, which he afterwards expressly applies to baptism. "No theological subject," says he, "requires more accurate investigation than the article of *evidence.* Evidence is that

* Stennet's Answer to Dr A., p. 213.

which *demonstrates*. Now there are various kinds and degrees of evidence, and it would very much contribute to clear a point in debate, were disputants first of all to agree on certain data, or *what* should be allowed evidence in the case in question. In law this is a matter of great consequence, and when divines proceed in the methods used in our courts of law, they gain infinite advantage. They do, as it were, swear the witnesses before they admit them as evidence." *

It is strongly insinuated by Mr B. that whatever has been said in vindication of Pædobaptism is fit only to deceive "superficial observers." Take his own words:—"It is manifest that notwithstanding the number of evidences usually subpœnaed against us, when the validity of infant sprinkling is to be *publicly* tried; and notwithstanding the formidable appearance they frequently make, in the eye of a superficial observer; yet, when these very evidences are impartially examined by Pædobaptists in *private*, without being perplexed with captious queries, they have not *a word* to say for infant sprinkling; but all their depositions are directed to prove doctrines and facts of a quite different nature." † Surely this is very astonishing if true. What! are *all* the conclusions of *every* Pædobaptist disputant so naked, so arbitrary, so irrational, that not *one principle* is found which, as a faithful evidence, and unsuborned, will stand uniform in its depositions, unmoved, and unawed by cross-examination? I would now only beg of the reader to admit, that it is at least *possible* Mr B. is misled by too hasty and partial a judgment. Is he sure, has he *demonstrated*, not only that the witnesses give evidence in his favour, but that, in Mr Robinson's phrase, they are "sworn before they are admitted?" I am not a little suspicious that his *principal* witness, nay, the *only* one in which he seems to place any confidence, is not *legally* introduced.

To be a little more explicit: I apprehend the Antipædobaptists build on the following *supposition* as their chief corner-stone, confide in it as their great palladium, and refer to it as the standard of all their arguments—namely, "That the law of baptism in the New Testament is of a nature *entirely positive*, as to the subject and mode of it;" and, if I understand them right, they are willing that their cause should stand or fall with it. Thus Mr B., when animadverting on the conduct of one of his brethren for occasionally quitting that fort: "Except it be maintained, that *positive*

* Robinson's Notes on Claude's Essay, vol. ii., p. 247. † Page 449.

ordinances are to be *entirely* governed by *positive law* and primitive example, it is *impossible* for him to stand his ground by *fair argument* in various cases, when disputing with Pædobaptists as such." * "All who pretend," says a gentleman before quoted, "to defend infant sprinkling, do but trifle, except they go to the *true ground* of the debate, and either prove that infant sprinkling is somewhere appointed by Christ our Legislator,—or that the authority of Christ is not necessary to the establishment of a *positive institute,*—or that some person has since appeared vested with such authority as Christ himself exercised." † A dire dilemma! But, upon recollection, to ease myself a little of this triple perplexity, I beg leave to return the *third* part of the difficulty to the author himself and the pretended successors of St Peter, to be amicably settled between them. The two former I shall not *trifle* with, but shall endeavour fairly to answer them. For as our opponents seem willing to hazard the reputation and existence of their cause with the strength of the aforesaid maxim,—"Baptism is a merely positive rite,"—and concluding it to be *divine,* they in their turn, "in the language of self-gratulation, repeat the old *Εὑρηκα* of Archimedes, *I have found it! I have found it!*"—it will be necessary, and it shall be the leading part of this work, to examine its pretensions with strictness. Thus I, also, shall attempt, on proper occasions, to ascertain the *kinds* and *degrees* of evidence, and "swear the witnesses." Nor am I discouraged at the prospect of "proving, that infant baptism IS SOMEWHERE *appointed* by Christ our Legislator."

§ 5. (Second,) I proceed to observe, that it appears to me extremely desirable, in controversial debates, that the disputants should be peculiarly solicitous to fix upon the *main hinge* of the difference between them, as that not only tends to reduce it in bulk, but would also supersede much impertinence, altercation, and false reasoning; hereby a fairer opportunity would be afforded for a close encounter, the combatants would stand, as it were, upon even ground, and thus we may hope the one party might avoid the charge laid against it by the other—viz., that it no sooner fixes upon a spot for the engagement, than it finds it necessary or expedient to quit that for another.

But how shall a man know what this turning-point is? Mr Robinson assures us that "Abraham's covenant, Greek particles,

* Page 462. † Robinson's Notes, vol. ii., p. 423.

and a thousand more such topics, no more regard the subject than the first verse of the first book of Chronicles, 'Adam, Sheth, Enosh!'"* Dreadful scythe! And no mean mower, to cut so much at one stroke! Dr S., with more moderation, expresses himself as follows: "This question," says he,—"WHETHER BAPTISM IS A MEAN OF FAITH AND REPENTANCE?—I take to be the *main hinge* upon which the dispute between us and the Pædobaptists turns."† I am at a loss, however, how to reconcile this declaration with what he says elsewhere; for instance, where he represents the supposed "JOINT INTEREST OF PARENTS AND THEIR CHILDREN IN THE COVENANT, as that upon which the *whole superstructure* of infant baptism stands," adding, "What pity, then, our brethren will not yield to the force of this plain truth, that positive institutions must in their own nature derive their authority, not from the uncertain deductions of analogy, but from the clear and express declarations of God's Word!" And what would follow? Why, "yielding to this proposition, they would at once find themselves obliged to lay aside infant baptism."‡ Certainly, then, the said proposition must be no mean hinge, if not the main one. But has the Doctor, or any one else, fairly proved not only that the proposition itself is true, but also *applicable* to the ordinance of baptism, and consequently that this "yielding" is our *duty*. Ah, *hic labor, hoc opus est,*—this, this is the main *difficulty*. What a pity the Pædobaptists should be so importuned to yield *without evidence!* I also will shew mine opinion respecting the question to be decided; and it is this—WHETHER IT IS THE WILL OF CHRIST THAT THE INFANTS OF BELIEVING PARENTS SHOULD BE BAPTIZED? It certainly is His will that all who are proper subjects of baptism should be baptized; we contend that the infants of believing parents are such; and therefore should be baptized. If they are proved to be *proper* subjects,—that is, such as come within Christ's *intention* when He instituted the ordinance,—it must follow that it is HIS WILL and pleasure they should be baptized. I say the infants of *believing* parents, for it is not essential to the controversy to include any others; what may be said of *others* is only a circumstance which does not affect the argument. For the Antipædobaptists' arguments are intended to conclude against *all children* alike, and it must be as conclusive against their system

* Notes on Claude, vol. ii., p. 423.
† Answer to Dr A., p. 34. ‡ Ibid., p. 174.

to prove it to be the *will of Christ* that any *one* infant whatever should be baptized, as if *all* were included in the reasoning.

Hence another question arises, namely, HOW MAY WE KNOW WHAT IS THE WILL OF CHRIST IN THIS MATTER? Mr B. replies: "Seeing baptism is as really and entirely a positive institution as any that were given to the chosen tribes, we cannot with safety infer either the mode or the subject of it from anything short of a *precept*, or a *precedent*, recorded in Scripture, and relating to that very ordinance." * He frequently expresses himself to the same purpose, as do all the writers of note on that side of the question. We see that Mr B. intends that this declaration should be applied not only to the mode, but also to the *subject* of baptism, that is, in other words, to this question—"WHO is to be baptized?" Now, independent of the *fact* that the right of infants is or is not supported by a revealed express precept or precedent, nay, on *supposition* that there is in Scripture *neither*, I maintain that the infants of believers are entitled to the ordinance, and of course that the rule he works by is a false one. It proves too much, and is reducible, on his own principles, to a downright contradiction. This assertion I hope to make good against our author in the following pages, notwithstanding what he says about "positive laws implying their negatives." †

What our opposing friends say about *positive rites*, *precepts*, *precedents*, "and a thousand more such topics," are to no good purpose, until they demonstrate that the faithful dictates of the law of our nature, of right reason and common sense, are no part of CHRIST'S WILL to His people and ministers, when these dictates are not *expressly* controlled and suppressed.

It is not a little surprising to observe how strenuously they oppose moral and analogical reasonings on this *one subject* of baptism, while they justly assume the same liberty with us on other subjects *equally positive*. I do not wish to see any, whom Christ has made free, wear the galling yoke of those ceremonies which He did not *intend* should continue, though *commanded* by Himself, and *practised* by His primitive disciples. Therefore, this liberty, I say, they *justly* take in all New Testament institutions, this of baptism *alone* excepted; and this liberty, we assert, is the right of us *all*, and without exception of *any* institution. The Antipædobaptists are guilty of a great piece of *inconsistence* in

* Page 13. † Page 187.

making such a distinction where there is no apparent ground of difference, and so in pronouncing judgment without suitable *evidence;* but we consistently claim a right of appealing to reason, analogy, and common sense, in connexion with the *nature* and *design* of the institution, and the most apparent *intention* of our Lawgiver. Nor is it in their power to maintain the *perpetuity* of this ordinance against the Quakers and others, the obligation of ministers to baptize those who are *taught*, &c., but by those very aids which they would fain deny us.

§ 6. (Third,) Inauspicious to this controversy, above most others, *terms* of ambiguous import, and unexplained, have been bandied about by both parties, on which, however, considerable stress has been laid; and thus much confusion and little profit have often attended very laboured arguments. For instance, the term INFANT SPRINKLING has been substituted for *infant baptism*, —not, indeed, always by way of contempt, but often improperly, because thereby is conveyed the secondary idea of a necessary connexion between the mode *sprinkling* and the baptism of an infant. Whereas thousands are *dipped* in infancy as well as sprinkled, in the Christian world, and some even in England. So that, upon our opponents' own principles, those infants who are dipped in the name of the Sacred Three, by a minister of Christ, in obedience to HIS WILL, ought to be reckoned as BAPTIZED; for since they maintain that baptizing and dipping are synonymous terms, it follows that those are baptized who are thus dipped. Not to insist upon the absurd consequence of substituting the one term for the other; for then it would also follow that there are *many baptisms* to which the *same person* ought often to submit for his health's sake; that as often as a child is dipped, it is baptized; that as often as any person in the world, Christian, Jew, Turk, or heathen, is plunged, on any occasion whatever, he is baptized; yea, that as often as *anything* is plunged, according to them, it is baptized; whereas I know of no Pædobaptists who wish to make sprinkling, or indeed any other *particular mode* of using water, synonymous with baptism.

Besides, the question is not whether Scripture expressly enjoins *infant baptism* by a direct specification, but whether it enjoins *baptism* to all *proper* subjects; and whether the administrator, who has a discretionary right of judging about qualifications, has sufficient reasons to conclude, or such evidence as the nature of

the case requires, that infants are such as are included within our Lord's *intention* when He instituted the ordinance. If infants possess, as I am persuaded they do, the essential qualifications of proper subjects, then it was not only needless, but would have been *impertinent* to specify them. When, therefore, I speak of the mode, it is on supposition of agreement about the subject; and when I speak of the subject, it is on supposition of agreement about the mode.

The remark already made on the abuse of terms is notoriously exemplified in the word COVENANT, without adding any more instances. It must be acknowledged that many Pædobaptist writers have been extremely unguarded in this particular, which has afforded no small handle to the opposite party. But our opponents are not free of blame on this head; and I am not a little surprised to find a person of Dr S.'s circumspection and polemical acumen prolong an argument to above thirty pages, which has no force at all but in proportion as the word *covenant* is taken in a sense which, I am persuaded, most Pædobaptists reject. And this conduct is the less excusable in this ingenious and worthy writer, because he professedly "lays down all the *possible senses* in which persons may be said to be in a covenant." * The Doctor surely needs but to be *reminded* of this matter, for his own sagacity must have *informed* him how inconclusive his reasoning is, had he taken all the *possible* senses of being in a covenant.

§ 7. (Fourth,) The numerous *quotations* in Mr B.'s "Pædobaptism Examined" make, indeed, a formidable appearance; and the rather because there are among them, as he justly observes, "some of the most eminent Pædobaptists that ever filled the professor's chair, or that ever adorned the Protestant pulpit." But my judgment entirely fails me if a *very great number* of these quotations are not perfectly *consistent* with the practice of the persons quoted, and therefore improperly introduced as evidences against themselves.

But supposing that all the passages our author employs were directly in his favour, and unexceptionably transcribed or translated; nay, were they an hundred times more numerous and large, and still more favourable to the cause for which he pleads, it is evident, from his own declaration, that he ought not to consider "either the number or weight of such quotations, as consti-

* Answer to Dr A., Letters ii. and iii.

tuting *any part* of the ground on which the distinguishing conduct of the party proceeds," or on which the cause depends. That many great and learned men have entertained different and even contradictory sentiments on the subject, does not affect it. That one should give up a topic in the debate, which another thought valid is immaterial. It is of little consequence, in point of argument in the present case, to urge what is the *opinion* of good and wise men upon the matter; whereas it is of essential importance to inquire whether what is pleaded for be defensible or indefensible. *Amicus Socrates, amicus Plato; sed major amica veritas.* It is certainly very becoming that the sentiments and testimonies of respectable authors should be treated with modesty and decorum, but I must beg leave to discard all human *authority,* or human *opinion,* singly or collectively taken, from bearing any part of the *principal* evidence; for I would appeal to the *case itself,* and not to the number or manner of its defenders or opposers.

CHAPTER I.

OF THE NATURE AND OBLIGATION OF POSITIVE LAWS AND INSTITUTIONS IN GENERAL, TOGETHER WITH THE USE OF INFERENTIAL AND ANALOGICAL REASONING, WITH RELATION TO THE ORDINANCE OF BAPTISM.

§ 1. Of law in general. § 2. Positive laws and institutions defined and explained. § 3. Positive precepts distinguished from moral ones. § 4. Their comparative obligations. § 5. The importance of positive institutions. § 6. They are necessarily of an external nature. § 7. They presuppose the dictates of reason and revelation. § 8. All the institutions of Christianity are of a mixed nature. § 9. As appears (first) from the false principle on which the contrary opinion is founded. § 10. (Second,) From the concessions of opponents, as to the nature of positive institutions. § 11–14. (Third,) From incontestable facts. § 15. How to determine what is positive and what is moral in a mixed law. § 16. The importance of analogical reasoning. § 17, 18. To deny the use of it in our inquiries about baptism, leads us to absurd consequences:—(First,) Without it, we can know nothing about the ordinance. § 19–22. (Second,) Our opponents cannot prove their authority to administer, and the validity of the action. § 23–26. (Third,) Nor to determine who is a proper subject. § 27. (Fourth,) Other ridiculous consequences. § 28, 29. (Fifth,) Transubstantiation retorted. § 30. Extremes of different kinds. § 31–34. Objections answered. § 35. Recapitulation.

§ 1. LAW, in its most general and comprehensive import, signifies a *rule of action*, dictated by some superior. And man, considered as a creature, must necessarily be subject to the laws of his Creator, as to disposition and conduct; and is bound, from the very idea of his absolute dependence, to regulate his actions and behaviour according to the intimations of His sovereign pleasure. The WILL OF GOD is the grand law of our nature. But this will is discoverable principally in two ways: either by *human sagacity*, including that intuitive perception whereby we discern what is most conducive to our own welfare, which welfare the will of our Maker ever supposes, and the exertions of right reason; or by *direct*

revelation. "If our reason," says an eminent writer, "were always, as in our first ancestor before his transgression, clear and perfect, unruffled by passions, unclouded by prejudice, unimpaired by disease and intemperance, the task of discovering what the *law of nature* directs in every circumstance of life would be pleasant and easy; we should need no other guide but this. But every man now finds the contrary in his own experience; that his reason is corrupt, and his understanding full of ignorance and error. This has given manifold occasion for the benign interposition of Divine Providence; which, in compassion to the frailty, the imperfection, and the blindness of human reason, hath been pleased, at sundry times and in divers manners, to discover and enforce its laws by an immediate and direct revelation. The doctrines thus delivered we call the revealed or Divine law, and they are to be found only in the Holy Scriptures. These precepts when revealed are found upon comparison to be really a part of the original law of nature, as they tend in their consequences to man's felicity." *

It is to be carefully noticed, that revelation, as referring to human actions, performs a double part: it either renders more authentic and indubitable what human sagacity perceived as probable, or else enjoins duties which mere reason could never have discovered. Hence arises the obvious distinction of moral and positive laws.

§ 2. By *positive laws* I understand such laws as do not appear to us obligatory, except upon the *mere authority* † of the Divine

* Blackstone's Commentaries, vol. i., Introd., § 2.

† When I say that the obligation of positive laws rests upon the *mere authority* of the Legislator, let the reader observe, that this is not to be confounded with an *arbitrary disposition* in the Deity. This distinction is well described by an elegant and philosophic pen:—"When some speak of the *will of God* as the *rule of duty*, they do not certainly mean a blind arbitrary principle of action, but such a principle as is *directed* by reason, and *governed* by wisdom, or a regard to certain ends in *preference* to others. Unless we suppose some principle in the Deity analogous to our sense of obligation, some antecedent affection, or determination of His nature to prefer some ends before others, we cannot assign any sufficient, or indeed any possible reason, why He should will one thing more than another, or have any election at all. Whatever, therefore, is the *ground* of His *choice* or will must be the *ground* of obligation, and not the choice or will itself. That this is so, appears further from the common distinction which divines and philosophers make between *moral* and *positive* commands and duties. The *former* they think *obligatory*, antecedent to will, or at least to any declaration of it; the *latter*, obligatory only in consequence of a positive appointment of the Divine will. But what foundation

Legislator. And this *authority* is sufficiently and absolutely binding from the consideration of our being previously assured of the wisdom, justice, and goodness of God, who enacts the law. *Positive institutions*, strictly taken, are a species of positive laws, and differ as a *law* differs from an *institution*. The former *may* be transient, but the latter is, at least for a term, of standing obligation. The command given to Abraham to sacrifice his son was a positive *law*, but not properly speaking an institution; and the rite of circumcision was a positive *institution* as well as a law. Jesus commanding Peter to walk on the water was a transient law; but His command to go and baptize proper subjects of all nations is a permanent institution. "And although no laws but positive be mutable, yet all are not mutable which be positive. Positive laws are either permanent or else changeable, according as the *matter itself* is, concerning which they were first made." *

§ 3. It is evident, upon the least reflection, that positive laws are no further binding than the authority by which they are enjoined is *discernible*. And it is equally evident, that there is no possible method of discerning the Lawgiver's authority and will, relative to these laws, but by His own express declarations; for if they are discernible in any other way, they are no longer positive. The *difference*, therefore, between positive and moral commands is clear and obvious. "Moral precepts," as Bishop Butler well observes, "are precepts the reasons of which we see: positive precepts are precepts the reasons of which we do not see." But I would further observe, with the same sagacious author, that "this is the distinction between moral and positive precepts, considered respectively *as such*. Moral and positive precepts are in some respects alike, in other respects different. So far as they are alike, we discern the reasons of both; so far as they are different, we discern the reasons of the former, but not of the latter." And, "Moral duties arise out of the nature of the case itself, prior to external command: positive duties do not arise out of the nature of the case, but from external command; nor would they be duties at all, were it not for such command received from Him whose creatures and subjects we are. Care, then, is to be taken, when a comparison is made between positive and moral

can there be for this distinction, if all duty and obligation be equally the result of *mere will?*"—*Fordyce's Elements of Moral Philosophy*, book i., sect. 3.

* Hooker's Eccles. Polit., book i., § 15.

duties, that they be compared no further than as they are different, no further than as the former are positive, or arise out of mere external command, the reasons of which we are not acquainted with; and as the latter are moral, or arise out of the apparent reason of the case, without such external command. *Unless this caution be observed, we shall run to endless confusion.*"* Whether Mr B. is sufficiently *cautious* in observing this necessary distinction, will appear, I presume, in the sequel of this treatise.

§ 4. The following remarks from the above-mentioned author, concerning our *comparative obligations* to obey positive and moral commands, appear just and pertinent:—"Suppose two standing precepts enjoined by the same authority; that in certain conjunctions it is impossible to obey both; that the former is moral, *i.e.*, a precept of which we see the reasons, and that they hold in the particular case before us; but that the latter is positive, *i.e.*, a precept of which we do not see the reasons: it is indisputable that our obligations are to obey the *former*, because there is an apparent reason for this preference, and none against it. Further, positive institutions, I suppose all those which Christianity enjoins, are *means* to a moral end; and the *end* must be acknowledged more excellent than the means. Nor is the observance of these institutions any religious obedience at all, or of any value, otherwise than as it proceeds from a moral principle. I add, that the whole moral law is as much matter of revealed command as positive institutions are; for the Scripture enjoins every moral virtue. In this respect, then, they are both upon a level. But the moral law is, moreover, written upon our hearts; interwoven into our very nature. And this is a plain intimation of the Author of it, which is to be preferred when they interfere. Upon occasion of mentioning together positive and moral duties, the Scripture always puts the stress of religion upon the latter, and never upon the former; which, though no sort of allowance to neglect the former, when they do not interfere with the latter, yet is a plain intimation, that when they do, the latter are to be preferred. Our Lord himself, from whose command alone the obligation of positive institutions arises, has taken occasion to make the comparison between them and moral precepts; when the Pharisees censured him for 'eating with publicans and sinners;' and also when they censured His disciples for 'plucking the ears of corn on the Sabbath-day.'

* Butler's Analogy, part ii., chap. i., p. 227.

Upon this comparison He has determined expressly, and in form, which shall have the preference when they interfere. And by delivering His authoritative determination in a proverbial manner of expression, He has made it general: 'I will have mercy, and not sacrifice.' For the sense, and the very literal words of our Lord's answer, are as applicable to *any other* institution, on a comparison between positive and moral duties, as to this upon which they were spoken. It is remarkable, too, that, as the words are a quotation from the Old Testament, they are introduced, on both the forementioned occasions, with a declaration, that the Pharisees did not understand the meaning of them. This, I say, is very remarkable. For, since it is scarcely possible for the most ignorant person not to understand the literal sense of the passage in the prophet, (Hos. vi.;) and since understanding the literal sense would not have prevented their 'condemning the guiltless,' (Matt. xii. 7;) it can hardly be doubted that the thing which our Lord really intended in that declaration was, that the Pharisees had not learnt from it, as they might, wherein the general spirit of religion consists. Yet it is highly necessary that we remind ourselves how great presumption it is to *make light* of any institutions of Divine appointment; that our obligations to obey *all* God's commands whatever are absolute and indispensable; and that commands merely positive, admitted to be [*such*, and] from Him, lay us under a moral obligation to obey them: an obligation moral in the strictest and most proper sense." *

It may here be objected, "Was not Abraham commendable for obeying a positive command at the expense of a moral one?" I answer, Abraham did well to obey the command to sacrifice his son, for it was in perfect consistence with the *morality* of the sixth command; which only implies that one *man* has no right to take away the life of another *unjustly*, but by no means intends that God has no right to take away the forfeited life of a sinful creature, which is absolutely at His disposal, by what methods He pleases. Whatever excellence there was in Abraham's obedience must spring from a disposition regarding God's absolute dominion, power, wisdom, &c. And his sacrificing Isaac was no duty any further than he was *certain* God commanded it. Had he been more forward or particular in that business than the command was express and circumstantial, he must have been in that proportion

* Butler's Analogy, *ut supra*, pp. 230–234.

guilty of a presumptuous crime; inasmuch as the positive command required him to offer violence to the natural feelings of humanity. Dr Grosvenor well observes, "Where the evidence is not *so clear*, the obligation is weakened in proportion; but where the terms are *plainly* binding, and strongly commanding, there the obligation is not to be evaded. When we see the broad seal of Heaven, where there is the Divine warrant, *Thus saith the Lord;* it is worse than trifling to cavil and say it is but an external rite." But we should not forget, that though *all* positive duties are above the reach of mere reason, some may be *more remote* than others; and the nearer those duties approach to our natural notions of congruity and expediency, the less is the evidence of positive authority, and therefore a smaller degree of it is proportionably binding.

§ 5. Notwithstanding the indisputable superiority of laws natural and moral to those of a positive nature, whenever they come into competition, the latter are of very great use and consequence. "The very notion of a visible Church implies positive institutions, for the *visibility* of the Church *consists* in them. Take away everything of this kind, and you lose the very notion itself. So that if a visible Church and an instituted method of education are advantages, the reason and *importance* of positive institutions in general is most obvious, since without them these advantages could not be secured to the world." *

§ 6. All acts of religious worship are either internal or external, All *internal* acts are of *moral* consideration as resulting from certain relations. As soon as these *relations* are discovered, whether by the dictates of reason or pure revelation it matters not, the obligation of duty naturally arises from them, independent of any external command to enforce the same. The propriety of this distinction will easily appear when we observe, that no internal act of religion *can be* our duty but what springs from *relative* considerations, and since no relation subsisting between moral agents can be *ascertained*, but we are immediately, from the nature of the case, laid under every obligation possibly assignable. Hence it follows, that whatever precepts and duties deserve the name of *positive*, must be of an *external* nature. Indeed "a *disposition* to obey Divine orders, either positive or moral," as Dr Grosvenor justly observes, "is part of that 'holiness without which no man

* Butler's Analogy, *ut supra*, pp. 216, 217.

shall see the Lord.'" But then it is equally true, that this very disposition is, in the most proper sense of moral obligation, *prior* to any external command, and, therefore, is perfectly distinct in its nature from the *positiveness* of those Divine orders. But notwithstanding all positive duties be in their own nature *external*, it does not follow that all external acts of religious worship are also positive. To elucidate this matter a little I would offer these two remarks:—

(1.) That God is to be worshipped *in general*, even in *some external* form, is of *moral* obligation; for as the obligation of internal worship arises from the relation we stand in to God without a positive command, so it is clear, from the nature of the case, this internal worship, reverence, gratitude, &c., ought to be externally *manifested* in a manner suited to these emotions. Nor can it be doubted that there is a natural congruity between such internal emotions and certain *modes* of expressing them in preference to others as less proper; for there are, doubtless, *some postures* and gestures of the body, independent of national custom, or the like circumstances, that may with *more propriety* than others be termed reverent, humble, modest, decent, devout, &c.; and we are under a moral obligation to *prefer* the most becoming, whenever this is not determined by positive command.

(2.) That any *particular* external mode of worship is enjoined to men, the reason and propriety of which does not appear prior to the external command, is of *positive consideration*. Positive precepts may be considered as certain *exceptions* from a general rule; but as a general rule and common analogy ought to be quitted *only* where they are incompatible with the exception, and precisely in that *degree*, so we are to recede from moral and analogical reasoning, in our inquiries after the path of duty, *only* when obliged by a positive precept *as such*, or exactly in the proportion it is so, and no further. For to do otherwise would be to quit a common rule without any apparent necessity, and to deviate from a way, which is at least probably the right one, to another which is absolutely uncertain. To this I would add, that the circumstances of an action being *naturally convenient*, may and ought to have considerable influence in determining what is or is not our duty in those circumstances of it that are indeterminate; for this plain reason, that we are sure the law of self-preservation is the law of God in all those cases where He has not shewn us the con-

trary. Whatever, therefore, appears to militate against life, health, and comfort without any revealed warrant, may and ought to be avoided on the principles of natural law and obligation. This is applicable to all the unprescribed circumstances of *positive* duties, as well as to those of a moral kind. "This law of nature," as Sir William Blackstone observes, "being coeval with mankind, and dictated by God himself, is, of course, superior in obligation to any other. It is binding over all the globe in all countries, and at all times,"* when not *expressly* countermanded by positive interposition.

§ 7. From what has been said, we may further conclude that a positive institution is a kind of *ingrafture*, so to speak, upon the law of our nature; the former is the scion, the latter is the stock. The choice of the institution depends upon the sovereign pleasure of God. But when this is determined, the law of nature written in our hearts, the principles of reason and common sense, or some revealed law, are *presupposed*, and may be compared to the stock upon which the ingrafture is made. For as the Scripture itself sheweth not with certainty what books are Divine,—as all acceptable obedience to Divine commands presupposes a suitable disposition,—as all arts and sciences have their *præcognita*, and every branch of abstruse learning presupposes first principles, and even the most infallible geometrical demonstration its axioms and postulates,—so all positive laws and institutions take some principles for *granted*.

§ 8. Another consequence that follows naturally from the preceding considerations is this: that there are *no precepts* now in force, at least, of a nature *merely* positive. None, I mean, wherein all the *minutiæ* of circumstances necessary for the discharge of the duty commanded are specified by the Lawgiver; and therefore those institutions of Christianity which are commonly termed positive, are but *partially* so. The necessity of ascertaining this difference in the present controversy is very apparent; and yet it has somehow hitherto been strangely overlooked by both contending parties. The Pædobaptists in general have tamely submitted to this position, "*Baptism and the Lord's Supper are positive institutions*," in its most absolute and undistinguished sense, as a maxim not to be controverted; and the Antipædobaptists are, doubtless, much obliged to us for this piece of complaisance, as it

* Comment., *ut supra*.

is evidently the main pillar of their cause, and the armour in which they trust. Pertinent to our present purpose is the following remark of Bishop Warburton:—"When two parties go upon different [principles], they naturally begin with examining one another's, whereby the true being at length settled or discovered, by its aid the controversy is timely determined; but where a *false* principle has the luck," as his Lordship expresses it, "to be embraced by *both sides*, they may wrangle for ever, and be, after all, but further from the truth."* But it may be asked, if we resign the good old maxim, "that the two standing ordinances of Christianity, Baptism and the Lord's Supper, are *positive* institutions, and *absolutely* so," and allow that they are of a *mixed* nature, or partly positive and partly moral, how are we to draw the line of distinction? If moral and positive precepts thus run into each other, like the shades of a painted figure, or the colours of the rainbow, how can we ascribe to all their due, or determine where the one ends and the other begins? Towards solving this difficulty, I beg leave to propose the following observations:—

§ 9. (First,) It is utterly abhorrent from sound divinity, as well as logical precision, not to say Christian modesty, to determine, *a priori*, with what *degree* of evidence any given particular institution *ought* to have been delivered by the Divine Legislator, any more than what the institution *itself* should be.

For, as Bishop Butler observes, "our principal obligation of searching the Scripture, and to what all our inquiries ought to be directed, is, in order to see what the scheme of revelation *really is*, instead of determining beforehand from reason, what the reason of it *must* be."† To *investigate* the degree of evidence from the fact of the institution, and to *infer* the degree of the obligation from the evidence found, is *our* province; but to determine what the nature and degree of the evidence *must* be, is the exclusive prerogative of the Institutor himself, whose will and authority must be the sole and exclusive ground of the institution.

I am, therefore, not a little surprised to find the gentleman, whose work I am more immediately examining, and for whose abilities and disposition I have a real esteem, expressing himself as follows:—"Positive institutions originate in the Divine pleasure, and derive their whole being from the sovereign will of God.

* Bishop Warburton's Alliance, book i., sect. 1.

† Butler's Analogy, *ut supra*.

We *cannot know anything* about their precise nature, their true design, the proper subjects of them, or the right mode of their administration, *further than the Scriptures teach.* It does not appear from the records of the Old Testament, that, when Jehovah appointed any branch of ritual worship, He left either the subject of it, or the mode of administration, to be inferred by the people, either from the relation in which they stood to Himself, or from general moral precepts, or from any branch of His moral worship, nor yet from any other well-known positive rite; but He gave THEM special directions relating to the very case. For as nothing but the Divine will can oblige the conscience, and as *that will cannot be known unless revealed,* so when made known, whether in reference to moral or positive duties, it must oblige. CONSEQUENTLY, SEEING BAPTISM IS AS REALLY AND ENTIRELY A POSITIVE INSTITUTION AS ANY THAT WERE GIVEN TO THE CHOSEN TRIBES, we cannot with safety infer either the mode or the subject of it from anything short of a precept or precedent, recorded in Scripture, and relating to that very ordinance. *It seems natural hence to infer,* that our sovereign Lord MUST HAVE REVEALED HIS WILL concerning the ordinance of baptism in a manner *proportional* to its obligation and importance. For, as an appointment of Christ, it originated in His will, and from a *revelation of that will* the whole of its obligation results. In proportion, therefore, as we annex the idea of *obscurity* to what He says about the mode and the subject of it, we either sink the idea of obligation to regard it, or *impeach the wisdom, or the goodness, or the equity of our Divine Legislator;* for we neither have, *nor can have, any acquaintance* with a positive institution *further than it is revealed.* We are, THEREFORE, obliged to conclude that our Lord HAS CLEARLY REVEALED His pleasure, with reference to this appointment, in that code of law, and rule of religious worship, which He gave to the Church in the volume of the New Testament." *

Thus also Dr S. :—"Here I would observe, then, that all positive institutions depend *solely* upon the *will* of the institutor, and that therefore in every question relating to them, we must be guided by his *express declarations,* or by those of persons he has duly authorised to *signify his will.* Nor is it to be doubted that a wise legislator will, *in all matters of this sort,* take care to

* Pages 11-13.

express his mind *in the most plain and intelligible manner.* Now baptism is a positive institution of Christ; and, agreeably to His infinite wisdom and goodness, He has expressed Himself in *the most clear and explicit manner* respecting both the mode and the subject of it. And, THEREFORE, the issue of this inquiry ought to be rested *alone* upon His own *express declarations,* and those of His apostles and first ministers." * And again:—"A right to baptism must depend, and depend alone, upon the direct express command of the Institutor; for it is absurd to talk of analogy and consequence in the matter of positive institutions." † And again:—"As positive duties depend solely upon the will of the institutor, every question respecting them ought in reason to be decided by his express declarations; which declarations, *if he be a wise legislator, will, no doubt, be clear and explicit.*" ‡ There are other passages in both these writers very much to the same purpose.

Not to stop to examine the truth and propriety of some things in the above quotations which are taken for granted,—such as the *absolute positiveness* of *every branch* of ritual worship under the Old Testament economy, wherein *nothing* was to be *inferred* by the people; or to inquire whether it can be *justly* concluded that *because,* on supposition that the Old Testament rituals were of that kind, those of the New Testament *must* be so likewise; both which I believe they would find too difficult to prove;—passing by such things, let us attend to the point of immediate consideration, which is to demonstrate, contrary to these assertions, that the New Testament institutions ARE NOT of a nature *merely positive;* or, in other words, that Baptism and the Lord's Supper, in their completeness and comprehension, are institutions of a *mixed* nature, that is to say, partly positive and partly moral. And in prosecution of this design, I further observe, that—

§ 10. (Second,) From these gentlemen's own account, it follows, that the institutions of the New Testament are either of a *mixed* nature or not *at all* positive. For, according to them, *all matters of this sort* should be expressed in the most plain and intelligible, the most clear and explicit manner; and, THEREFORE, seeing Baptism and the Lord's Supper are not IN FACT so circumstantially described as not to need, or so minutely express as to prohibit, moral reasoning, analogy, and consequence, it inevitably follows, that, if these

* Answer to Dr A., pp. 3, 5. † Ibid., p. 90. ‡ Ibid., p. 293.

institutions are not of a *mixed* nature, partly positive and partly moral, they are no positive institutions AT ALL. And as they allow none to be of that sort but these two, Christianity must be left without any; and since Christianity is the last and unalterable dispensation of religion among men, it is impossible there should be any to the end of time; and so all positive institutions are, on their own supposition, fairly and utterly banished out of the world.

Besides: their anticipated mode of determining the degree of evidence with which a positive law *ought to be* enacted, is quite subversive of the very nature of such a law; for it is allowed on all hands, and by these gentlemen in the plainest terms, that the distinguishing nature of positive laws consists in the measure and the degree of their *institution*, and that they derive their whole being from the *sovereign will* of God. And thus their reasoning is built upon a *petitio principii*, a begging of the question, whereby they first take it for granted that baptism is an institution merely positive, and then take it further for granted that being such, it *must be* free from all obscurity.

§ 11. (Third,) But if it be contended, that our Lord has, *actually*, been plain and explicit in the institution of this ordinance, and that, therefore, it is easy to be understood; I might ask, to *whom* is it easy? and what *sense* of it is easy? Is it the honest Christian, the judicious divine, the learned critic, or the profound universal scholar, to whom the sense is *easy?* But what sense of the institution is so plain and easy? Mr B. and Dr S., no doubt, think that their *own* sense bids fair for this character. But here is an extraordinary phenomenon! Here are not a few thousands of honest Christians,—not a few hundreds of judicious divines, learned critics, profound scholars,—commentators who have developed the most abstruse parts of Holy Writ, who yet cannot see this sense of the institution which is so *easy*. Can *that sense* of a passage of Scripture, or of the nature and design of an institution, be with any propriety called *plain* and *easy, clear, explicit* and *most intelligible*, which five men out of twenty contend is the true sense, but which the other fifteen, possessed of an equal share of parts, piety, and learning, maintain is the wrong sense? That great numbers should unanimously stand out against some kinds of truth, not very abstruse in their own nature, is a very possible case; either when a truth may not appear to be of so much importance as to engage persons

duly qualified to study it with close application, or when it has been a point of mere speculation, or when slavish fear and worldly interest have prevailed over the honest dictates of conscience; but that so many Protestant worthies, who have left all to follow Christ, that so many learned commentators and casuists, of unblemished character, of unexceptionable ability, having no interest to serve whereby the judgment should be biased or the conscience bribed, calling no man master upon earth, but, with a generous freedom, shaking off the prejudices of education, the shackles of custom, and the influence of different systems;—that these, I say, should oppose unanimously the sense of an institution *quite plain* and *easy* to be understood, is a case, I believe, unparalleled and unaccountable. I would rather infer, and with what propriety let the reader judge, that either the Antipædobaptist sense of Christ's institution is *not at all* the true sense, or, at any rate, a sense *very difficult* to come at.

§ 12. But Mr B. still urges, that "in proportion as we annex the idea of *obscurity* to what is said about the mode or the subject of baptism, we either sink the idea of obligation to regard it, or impeach the wisdom, or the goodness, or the equity of the Divine Legislator." That his idea of the institution of baptism, as an ANTIPÆDOBAPTIST, appears to by far the greater number of competent judges an *obscure* one, is an incontestable *fact;* judges competent, I mean, in a moral as well as natural respect. And, therefore, it follows, on his own principles, that their obligation to adopt the Antipædobaptist hypothesis is *sunk* in proportion; and that the persons, so qualified, who can see *no truth* in it, are under *no obligation* to embrace it; but are obligated to retain the PÆDOBAPTIST system, as what they see *more clearly.*

Allowing, therefore, our annexing the idea of *obscurity* to what is said about the subject and the mode of baptism, in the respect now mentioned, to be true, I might be excused from vindicating myself and my friends from the crime of impeaching the Divine wisdom, goodness, and veracity, by adopting the alternative of sinking the obligation; were it not that Mr B.'s charges run still higher, when speaking of the signification of the terms of the institution. "Nay," says he, "were the leading term in any human law to have an ambiguity in it, equal to that for which our brethren plead with regard to the word *baptism;* such law would certainly be considered as betraying either the weakness or the

wickedness of the legislator; and be condemned, as opening a door to perpetual chicane and painful uncertainty. Far be it, then, from us to suppose that our gracious and omniscient Lord should give a law relating to Divine worship, and obligatory on the most illiterate of His real disciples, which may be fairly construed to mean *this* or *that* or the *other* action,—a law which is calculated to excite and perpetuate contention among His wisest and sincerest followers,—a law that would disgrace a British Parliament in respect of its *triple* meaning, as being involved in the dark ambiguity of a pagan oracle." * What! and is Mr B. also among the analogical, hypothetical, and consequential reasoners, upon the matter of a positive institution? This mode of reasoning, on *our* principles, would have some plausibility; on *his*, is quite out of character. But what signifies setting up our own idea of propriety against a plain fact? It is a *fact*, that wise and good men *cannot* see the essentiality of dipping in the leading term of this law; while Mr B. and his friends think they do. It is a *fact*, that wise and good men sincerely believe the law of Christian baptism extends to infants, and that they are as much included in the very terms as their parents are. But does it from thence follow, that our Divine Legislator has less wisdom than a British Parliament, or designs an imposition like a pagan oracle?

§ 13. Mr B.'s argument is, that as the principal terms of all approved human laws are without ambiguity in their meaning, *therefore* much more *ought* the laws of Christ relating to Divine worship to be so. But do we forget that positive institutions depend entirely on the *sovereign will* of Heaven, and that we know *nothing* about them further than they are revealed? Allowing this; yet it may be objected, if our all-wise Legislator *does* enact any law of this kind, we may reasonably presume that it will be so *plain* and *easy* that the most illiterate of His real disciples cannot mistake its meaning. This is still indulging *supposition* against *fact*.

Let us suppose, for illustration's sake, that an antediluvian saint had adopted this mode of reasoning:—"It is true, it depends entirely on the sovereign will of God whether He will reveal Himself to my posterity, whether He will give them laws and positive institutions to regulate their lives and prove their obedience; but *if He do* so favour them, I may easily infer from His infinite wis-

* Page 34.

dom, goodness, and equity, from His omniscience and grace, that these laws and institutions must be so *plain* and *easy* that the most ignorant of the righteous cannot misinterpret them. For were I, a sinful, short-sighted creature, to form a code of laws for my posterity, they should be all of that character; and, therefore, much more will those which the Most High may deliver be free from all ambiguity. Yes, He sees the end from the beginning; and as He is capable by reason of His unerring wisdom, so He is bound by His immense goodness, to prevent all occasion of chicane and painful uncertainty. If prophets be raised to address my ruined posterity, their message must be so *plain* and *easy* to be understood, that none of those to whom they are delivered can mistake their meaning; their credentials must be of such a nature as to admit of no debate whether they should be credited or not. And when the promised Saviour appears, He will, undoubtedly, deliver Himself in such a manner as to prevent all dispute among His followers, especially concerning matters of everlasting moment. There will be no question among them whether this Saviour is the Creator himself in man's nature, or only an extraordinary prophet of superior wisdom and holiness; since all this may be prevented by a few words out of His own mouth. He will put it out of all doubt with all the wise and pious of His followers, whether He is to be served with, or without, a form of devotion in public assemblies; whether Christian magistrates ought, or ought not, to form an *alliance* between the Church and the state; whether or not some person, for the time being, should act as His viceroy to the end of time, at the head of His universal Church. And if He should institute a rite of initiation into His Church, it is reasonable to expect that His wisdom and goodness will prevent all painful uncertainty respecting the *mode* of admission, and who are the proper *subjects*," especially when we consider that "all doubt of the matter might be precluded by a few plain words." Thus the pious antediluvian might meditate, and reason, *a priori*, from the wisdom and goodness of the Great Supreme; rejoicing in the prospect of the halcyon days which his posterity should enjoy, when all laborious search and tedious analogical reasoning would be utterly precluded by the explicitness and perspicuity with which He would signify His pleasure. All this seems quite reasonable, very desirable, and mighty fine; but yet is attended with one great infelicity —it is a theory which does not agree with facts. But shall a be-

nighted sinner exclaim, when *his* views of propriety and wisdom are confronted, deranged, and totally overthrown, "The LORD'S ways are not equal!" Rather let me shrink to my proper nothingness, and say, "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are His counsels! and His ways, His providence, and His various dispensations, how past finding out!" "Let us appeal," says Dr S., "to the words of the institution, which, no doubt, are expressed, *as all laws* OUGHT TO BE, in so *clear* a manner as that he who runs may read." I walk and read, stand and read, meditate and read, pray and read, and yet cannot discern the sense he puts upon the law of the institution. And, what is far more extraordinary, thousands whom it concerns, many of whom are far better qualified to judge than I am, are equally at a loss to discover what Dr S. pronounces to be, *without doubt*, so *clear* a meaning that he who runs may read it.*

Our opponents involve themselves in a glaring inconsistence. They maintain that positive rites depend solely on the pleasure of the institutor; and then, with the same breath, plead that their evidence *must* be in a certain given degree of explicitness, that is, the superlative degree. For if they are not expressed in the *most* plain and intelligible manner, they are not worthy of a *wise* legislator. This is to profess *absolute subjection* to the sovereign Lord, and afterwards to *prescribe rules* for Him to enact His laws. Thus they insist upon a postulatum on which to erect their system, which it is out of our power to grant them without offering open violence to logical precision and sound theology.

§ 14. From what has been said I conclude—since it is essential to an institution *merely positive*, our opponents themselves being judges, it should be free from all obscurity and ambiguity, relative to mode and subject, and since the institution of baptism does not bear that character, as stubborn facts proclaim—that baptism is an ordinance of a *mixed* nature. And it appears further reason-

* What the pious Mr Flavel said of himself, is, no doubt, the unfeigned sentiment of numbers not less sincere and upright than he, however superior he was to most divines in ministerial abilities and usefulness: viz., "We have a witness in your bosom," says he in his reply to Mr Cary, "that the defence of *Christ's pure worship and institutions* hath cost us something; and as for me, were I convinced by all that you have here said, or any of your friends, that in baptizing the infants of believers we did really depart from the primitive purity, I would renounce it, and turn Anabaptist the same day."—*Flavel's Reply to Mr Cary's "Solemn Call:" Works*, vol. ii., p. 1003, 1st edit.

able to conclude, from the foregoing premises, that, as all allow baptism has *something* in it of a positive nature, "the setting apart a person apparently a proper subject of the visible Church of Christ, by the use of water, in the name of the Father, of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, by a teacher of Christianity," seems to bid fair for that character. Thus far Pædobaptists and Antipædobaptists generally agree; but whether a total *immersion* of the subject be *essential* to the ordinance, or even the *most proper* mode of admission, and whether some infants are not equally entitled to the privilege as adults, with other questions of inferior consideration, must be necessarily decided by moral and consequential reasoning.

§ 15. Let us now attend to what seems the only remaining method for determining about the degree and proportion of *positiveness* and *morality* in a law or institution commonly termed positive. And here I observe, towards solving this difficulty, the two things following:—

(1.) That we ought carefully to distinguish between what is true of a positive institute in its own nature, or simply and *abstractedly* considered, and the same thing attended with its necessary circumstances. It has been shewn, that baptism is an institution which is positive but in part, and, therefore, that such a distinction as is here proposed is necessary. I am willing, then, to own the propriety of Mr B.'s reasoning upon the nature and essential properties of positive institutions, *as far as they are such*, but deny that any just consequences from them are favourable to Antipædobaptism. And if we admit, what I hope has been sufficiently proved, and what the following pages will more abundantly demonstrate, that there is no institution of the gospel dispensation so merely positive as not requiring prudential and moral aid to determine about the due performance and proper subjects thereof,—and, consequently, that the ordinance of baptism does not agree to the *abstract* notion of positive institutions,—I venture to assert, as no less true than extraordinary, that there is not one of all the quotations from Pædobaptist writers contained in the first part of his "Pædobaptism Examined," concerning the nature of positive institutions, but is *perfectly consistent* with Pædobaptist principles! But the specious sophism was supported by arbitrarily uniting what were in themselves different; by extending the abstract nature an institution to the particular circumstances of it.

(2.) Laying aside all preconceived ideas, we should carefully inquire *how far* any institution in question, from an impartial survey of what is recorded of it, *agrees* with the definition of a positive institution in its abstract sense. We all agree that such an institution, as deserves the denomination of positive, is *that*, the reason of which we do not see, yet delivered with such plainness, clearness, and circumstantial evidence, as is liable to no misconstruction from a person of common capacity and religious sincerity. Let us apply this rule to baptism, and we find that there are *some* things wherein the rule and the ordinance agree, and *other* things wherein they disagree. Bishop Butler will furnish us with a slight specimen of the manner of applying the above rule:—"The most important obligations and privileges signified by baptism are of *moral* consideration. For instance, if some are commanded 'to be baptized in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost,' there are obligations of duty resulting from the command *as positive*, but the *importance* of these duties may be judged of by observing that they arise not from positive command *merely*, but also from the offices which appear from Scripture to belong to those Divine Persons in the gospel dispensation, or from the *relations* which, we are there informed, they stand in to us." * This I call a *specimen*, but that the distinction above noticed is applicable to the subject and circumstances of baptism will be afterwards considered.

§ 16. Hence we may infer, that analogical and consequential reasoning is not only lawful, but *essential* to this controversy.

We have seen (§ 12) that our opponents themselves do occasionally run into this strain, however inconsistent with their favourite maxim; and we have seen that, hitherto, it has done them no service. From their being so extremely reluctant to admit of this sort of argument on the subject of baptism, we may justly suspect that it is proportionably injurious to their tenet. Mr B., indeed, is very explicit on this head, as before observed. "Except it be maintained," says he, "that positive ordinances are to be *entirely* governed by positive law and primitive example, it is *impossible* for the Antipædobaptists to stand their ground by *fair argument*, in various cases, when disputing with Pædobaptists as such." † Dr S. insists, "that presumptive proofs are insufficient to establish duties of a positive kind." ‡ And I take the liberty of insisting,

* Butler's Analogy, *ut supra*. † Page 462. ‡ Page 292.

in my turn, that, as no such duty exists, in his application of the term *positive*, presumptive proofs are very good ones, because they are the very best that the nature of the case can admit of. To argue from what is *certain* in one case, the *probability* of a case less evident, when the latter bears some striking relation or resemblance to the former, has ever been reckoned fair and proper in subjects of morality and duty; it therefore follows, that, as the duty in question is partly founded on *moral* grounds, the same method of arguing is fair and proper to a certain degree in the present case. For when the *circumstances* of a duty commonly termed positive, are left in an indeterminate state, and therefore of necessity must yield to *moral* considerations, and when these moral considerations do not arise immediately from the evident relation of the case in hand, or are not determined clearly by precept or example; what more rational method of determining these circumstances, than by recurring by means of analogy to those which we are sure met with the Divine approbation?

What has been said already on this article might appear, I presume, quite sufficient, in vindication of a method of defence which our opponents would fain deprive us of, were it not that they are impertinently inimical to it upon every occasion, as might be easily shewn by numerous quotations out of their writings, and Mr B.'s "Pædobaptism Examined" in particular. But as their favourite terms, POSITIVE LAW and APOSTOLIC EXAMPLE, as opposed to *moral* and *analogical* reasoning, are a two-edged sword, which they brandish with great parade, and with which they pretend to do great execution, let us now see whether this weapon may not be wrested out of their hands.

§ 17. That principle, whereby our opponents decry all use of analogy in this debate, is reducible to the most glaring *absurdities*. For—

(First,) It is impossible that Mr B., Dr S., or any one else in the present day, should know anything about this ordinance without the aids of the very method which they so much oppose. This is evident when we reflect, that as Scripture can never be proved to be of Divine original, so neither can any particular part of it be proved to have *this* meaning rather than *that*, but by means of moral and analogical reasoning. The evidence of revelation is either external or internal: its *external* evidence must depend on the *faithfulness* of our predecessors who have recorded and trans-

mitted such facts as constitute the same; but will any man, *compos mentis*, hesitate a moment respecting the necessity of examining the pretensions and credentials of our fellow-mortals, when they assert they were sent of God to claim the attention, belief, and obedience of mankind? And how can this be decided without the assistance of moral reasoning? Its *internal* evidence must be sought by the same method; for nothing can be of God which is evidently and demonstrably false or impious, however recommended by signs and wonders.

Nor will it avail to say, the most abstruse things, indeed, will admit of such investigation, but some things are "so plain and easy to be understood that he who runs may read." Such parts of Scripture, then, need only to be proposed, and they appear *self-evident*. I will not deny but there are many such truths in Scripture, inasmuch as some of the plainest dictates of common sense and reason are there recorded. And, indeed, this is no small part of the glory of revelation, that it is "a republication of natural religion; so that natural religion," in the words of Bishop Butler, "seems as much proved by the Scripture revelation, as it would have been had the design of revelation been nothing else than to prove it."* But it must amount to an evident contradiction to assert that *positive laws* are *self-evident* in their own nature; for, on the supposition, we know nothing about them further than they are *revealed*. Nor will it mend the matter to say, that *when* revealed they are self-evident; for it is likewise granted that they derive their whole force and being from the sovereign *authority* that enjoins them; which authority itself cannot be self-evident, but must be examined, weighed, compared, and finally determined by some *antecedent* principles; and this is the province of moral reasoning and analogy.

§ 18. But if it be said, that "though we need these aids to ascertain the truth of revelation, yet when that is once done we have no further need of it,"—I answer, this can by no means solve the difficulty; for in order to discover the import of any law or precept of Holy Writ, we must either take the *literal* and strict meaning of it, or we must have recourse to the *design* of the passage from the most probable intention of the Lawgiver: if the *latter*, the point is given up; if the *former*, the most absurd consequences will immediately follow. For it is evident to

* Butler's Analogy, *ut supra*.

a demonstration, that two persons, who would undertake to perform a positive command, may both alike plead the strict *letter* of the law to be on their side, and yet one of them may *commit sin* while so doing, and the other discharge incumbent duty. And I may venture to say, there is not a positive law in all the inspired volume relating to the Mosaic or the Christian economy but might furnish an illustration and proof of what I assert. To avoid prolixity, I shall insist upon the law of baptism only, on which Mr B. thus reflects: "It should be well observed, that when our Lord after his resurrection, says, 'Go—baptize,' He does not mention baptism by way of allusion, or incidentally. No, He speaks the language of *legislation;* He delivers DIVINE LAW. He mentions and appoints baptism as an ordinance of God, and as a branch of human duty. Where, then, must we expect precision in the use of terms, if not on such an occasion?" * Where? Why in those parts of revelation where man's everlasting welfare is more immediately concerned. For is it probable that the law of initiation into the visible kingdom of Christ, and an external relation to Him and His Church, is of more importance, and requiring greater precision in its terms, than that which ascertains their qualification for the kingdom of grace and glory? But supposing, for argument's sake, that the law of baptism (Matt. xxviii. 19) is delivered with greater precision than usual, and let us try,—not with a view to impeach the wisdom or the goodness of Christ,—let us try, I say, whether moral reasoning and analogy are not necessary for the right observance of it, even upon our author's own principles.

Mr B. will allow that this law consists of three parts: the action itself, "baptize;" the qualification necessary for the subject previous to baptism, implied in the word "teach;" and the commission given to the administrators, "Go ye." The first of these ideas will be more professedly examined hereafter; but, by the by, one would think that the great diversity of opinions respecting this *action*, and the various practices of different nations and churches in performing what they apprehend to be included in it, might lead a modest and impartial observer to conclude,—not that one party of Christians exclusively are in the right, while all the others are *essentially* wrong, many of whom have seriously, deliberately, and impartially examined the authority and the mind of their Divine Lord in the matter, whose sovereign pleasure is

* Page 33.

more dear to them than their lives, and whom they would not offend therein for the world,—to conclude, I say, either that the precept is not delivered with all that plainness and precision which our opponents contend for in favour of *their* manner of performing the *action*, or else that it is of such latitude as to include divers manners. I would only remark, that, supposing (without granting) the exclusive invariable meaning of the term *baptize* signifies to immerse, I might, on *that* supposition, so fulfil the command *literally*, in plunging a proper subject, as that Mr B., I am persuaded, would either not admit it to be at all true baptism, or would require no small assistance from that very method of arguing which he oppugns to prove its validity. But I shall observe more particularly some things, with respect to the commission of the administrators, which will furnish a second argument against the opposers of analogical and moral reasoning on the subject.

§ 19. (Second,) It is impossible, on the principle I am opposing, for Mr B. or Dr S. to prove their right and *authority* to administer the ordinance of baptism to any subject, and, of consequence, the *validity* of the action. The sentiment I refer to is, that nothing short of a *precept* or *precedent* will suffice for the due performance of the duty. Now, that every action performed by apostles, disciples, or saints, with or without the special directions of the Holy Spirit, is not to be regarded as a *precedent*, or an example to be imitated, will, I presume, admit of no debate. It therefore follows that we must either gather from moral considerations, or consequential deductions, whether any particular action is to be imitated by us or not; or else that there must be a *precept* previously given, whereby any such action receives a special direction and determination to influence our choice. And so it remains that an action, however and by whomsoever performed, can be to us no rule of duty, *no precedent at all*, OF ITSELF. It is therefore absurd to say that we can regard *any action* as a precedent without the aids of inferential reasoning. We are now driven to *precepts* to perform the difficult task. Let us, therefore, attend to that "language of legislation, that Divine law where we may expect," we are told, "the greatest plainness and precision." "GO YE therefore, and teach;" this is the *precept*. But to *whom* is it given? The answer, no doubt, will be, To the *disciples*, and to their *successors* in the gospel ministry. Rather, To the disciples, and, we may justly *infer*, to their successors in the gospel

ministry to the end of time. For our Lord adds, "Lo, I am with you alway, even to the end of the world;" which *more likely* refers to our Lord's authoritative and gracious presence with all the then future properly-qualified teachers and propagators of the gospel, than exclusively His immediate successors, the apostles and disciples, who should be endowed from above with extraordinary abilities, remarkably owned, and attended with signs and wonders for the establishment of the Christian religion on the ruins of the Jewish hierarchy.

But supposing (without granting) that the former proposition is so self-evident as to preclude all need of inference or analogy; the question still returns, what constitutes a disciple and teacher of religion? Christian godly parents are disciples, and they also teach their children and domestics the principles of Christianity; have *they*, therefore, authority to *baptize* such as they teach? Without analogy and inference, how can their pretensions be disproved? May they not plead, from the very passage in question, that because they may teach, they may likewise baptize? It will be said, perhaps, the administration of gospel ordinances belongs to *public* teachers. But public and private are *relative* terms; and who shall draw the line of distinction *how far* public his character and teaching must be? May any one run, without being sent, to teach and baptize? Does this constitute a teacher of Christianity, that he *fancies* he may set up for one? or is he to be admitted to the discharge of his ministerial function in some more regular way? How shall we judge about the *regularity* of that way? The wearer of the triple crown asserts a universal claim to this right of admission as his sovereign prerogative. With a priestly nod, with roaring bulls, or with dire anathemas, he excludes all of us, who are of the heretical tribe, from approaching to officiate at the baptismal font or the holy altar. And what is extraordinary, he urges *express, literal* passages of Scripture, on which to found his pretensions.

§ 20. But Protestants, also, talk of the Divine right of Episcopacy, and the necessity of an episcopal commission, for preaching God's Word, and for the valid ministration of the Christian sacraments. And this they attempt to prove from the Holy Scriptures, as well as the doctrine and practice of the primitive Church. Thus the *twenty-third* Article of the Church of England, paraphrased by a faithful son and champion:—"'It is not lawful *by the law*

of God for any man to take upon him the office of public preaching, or ministering the sacraments in the congregation *or Church of Christ,* before he be lawfully called *according to the law of God,* and sent to execute the same. And those we ought to judge lawfully called and sent *according to the law of God,* which be chosen and called to their work by men who *by the law of God* have public authority given unto them in the congregation *or Church of Christ,* to call and send ministers into the Lord's vineyard.' I have put in the words 'according to the law of God,'" says the paraphrast, "because it is certain *that* is meant by the word *lawful* in this place. These articles were drawn up by the bishops and clergy in convocation or synod, who were ever esteemed to be interpreters or expositors of the law of God, and to have authority to declare what was agreeable to His laws, and what not. Consequently," says this Doctor of Laws, "when they say, 'it is not lawful for any man to take upon him the office of public preaching or ministering the sacraments in the Church,' they could not mean that it was not lawful in this realm only by virtue of the temporal laws here in force, because they had no authority to declare or expound those laws; but that it was *not lawful* according to the LAW OF GOD, and therefore could not be allowed in any realm, in any country, in any Church or society of Christians. And in the preface to the Forms of Ordination, it is said, that 'it is *evident* to all men diligently reading *Holy Scripture* and ancient authors, that from the apostles' time there have been these orders of ministers in Christ's Church, bishops, priests, and deacons. Which offices were evermore had in such reverend estimation, that no man by his own private authority might presume to execute any of them, except he were first called, tried, examined, and known to have such qualities as were requisite for the same; and also by public prayer, with imposition of hands, were approved and admitted thereunto.' She [the Church] also declares these three orders to be of *Divine institution,* when she says that 'it is evident to all men diligently reading *Holy Scripture* that there have been these orders of ministers in Christ's Church.' And, therefore, according to the doctrine of the Church of England, declared by her Ordinal and Articles as they expound each other, 'it is not lawful for any man to take upon him the office of public preaching, or ministering the sacraments in the congregation *or Church of Christ,* before he be lawfully called and sent to exe-

cute the same by some bishop;' *that is, before he be* EPISCOPALLY ORDAINED; and this by the LAW OF GOD, who by His Holy Spirit has appointed the order of bishops, and *directed* that only those who are of that order should ordain others; consequently is a law not only obligatory in the Church of England, but throughout the whole Catholic Church. She further declares, in the *twenty-sixth* Article, that 'although in the visible Church the evil be ever mingled with the good, and sometimes the evil have chief authority in the ministration of the word and sacraments, yet forasmuch as they do not the same in their own name, but in Christ's, and do minister by *His commission* and authority, we may use their ministry, both in hearing the Word of God, and in the receiving of the sacraments. Neither is the effect of Christ's ordinance taken away by their wickedness, nor the grace of God's gifts diminished from such as by faith and rightly do receive the sacraments ministered unto them; which be effectual because of Christ's *institution* and *promise*, although they be ministered by evil men.' Here the Church plainly makes the VALIDITY of the sacraments depend entirely upon Christ's COMMISSION. For the reason alleged why they may be received from evil ministers, is because such ministers have *commission and authority* from Christ, and that sacraments so received are effectual because of Christ's *institution and promise*, which evidently implies that where there is no such commission there is not the institution and promise of Christ, consequently they are not effectual without the commission. Thus the Church of England most clearly maintains and asserts both the *Divine right of Episcopacy*, and also the necessity of an *episcopal commission* to the VALID administration of the sacrament." *

§ 21. Thus the large body of venerable bishops, together with their numerous sons and servants the clergy, in convocation assembled, as the representative of millions, deliver their final and permanent sentiments, concerning the *authority* necessary for ministers to discharge the duties of their function, and the *validity* of their ministrations thereon depending. But what is very remarkable is, that their determination appeals, not to the uncertain reports of tradition, to moral, inferential, or analogical reasoning, but to a *positive law;* to the *express institution* of Christ. And our expounding Doctor justifies these ecclesiastical decisions, *on*

* Dr Brett's Divine Right of Episcopacy, §§ 1–4.

the very same principles, by appealing to the language of legislation, the Divine positive command, to which we first referred. Thus he settles his point:—"That the *apostolical* or highest order, which was appointed to supply the place of Christ Himself after His ascension, was intended by Him not for a temporary, but a perpetual institution, is evident from the commission He gave them after His resurrection. For, having singled out the eleven apostles, out of above five hundred, to whom He appeared at once after His resurrection, and appointed them alone to meet Him at a mountain in Galilee, He spake unto them, saying, 'All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.' And having thus declared His own power, He commits it to them, and says, 'Go ye therefore,' as my deputies and vicegerents, 'and disciple all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.' In which words He *plainly* shews, that their office was intended to be continued alway, even unto the end of the world, and He confirms this promise with an *Amen*, thereby testifying that He would verily and indeed fulfil it. Now it was *plainly* the apostolical office which our Saviour here promised He would be alway present with, to ratify and confirm their ministrations. For it was only the eleven disciples or apostles, whom He had before sent, as He was sent by the Father, to whom He made the promise. And that the promise was made to the *office* or *order* with which He had vested them, and not to their persons, is *evident*, because otherwise His promise must have failed at their deaths, and consequently He was so far from continuing with *them* to the end of the world in the discharge of this office, that He did not continue with them an hundred years, for all these eleven apostles were dead in less than that time. But some pretend that the words which we here translate, 'the end of the world,' signify no more than 'the end of that age.' But if they are understood to signify no more, then the commission to disciple by baptism, and to teach what Christ had commanded, must end with that age also, and then Christianity must have ceased with that age, so that ever since our preaching has been vain, and your faith also vain; for it has since had no promise of Christ to depend upon, if this promise is to be extended to no longer time; and that is not *faith*, but *presumption*, which is not founded upon any promise. But if the

promise is to be extended to the end of the world,—and that it must be, or there can be no Christianity in the world,—then must the office, the *apostolical office* or order, to which it was made, continue so long. For Christ did not say, 'I am alway present to ratify and confirm these ministrations by whomsoever performed;' but, 'I am with you alway; with *you* whom I have sent, as I was sent by the Father, with *you* whom I have appointed to disciple all nations by baptism, with *you* whom I have appointed to teach all things which I have commanded, and will ratify and confirm what *you* do in these ministrations,' that is, *you* who are commissioned for that purpose. Therefore the office, *the apostolical office*, to which this commission was given, must continue for the ministry of these ordinances, or there is no promise that these ordinances shall be effectual to any after the death of those persons to whom this commission was particularly given. But if the ordinances continue, then the commission also is continued, for the promise is not made to the ordinances, but to the commissioners in the ministration of those ordinances; and, therefore, if those who have not the commission undertake to administer them, there is no word of promise to make such ministrations effectual.

"Now, whence do the sacraments receive their *validity?* Certainly not from anything that is naturally intrinsic to the outward visible sign, but from the *institution* of Jesus Christ. But, then, it is not every kind of baptism or of washing with water that will have effect; it must be done according to *His institution*, or it is not the sacrament which He has ordained. Now, when Christ ordered baptism to be administered to all nations, when He appointed that all should eat of that bread and drink of that cup, He did not only ordain in what manner, or with what form of words these sacraments should be celebrated, but likewise directed what particular *persons* should celebrate them. Thus when He ordered all nations should be made disciples by baptism, He did not indiscriminately command *all persons*, that should know how to recite the form of words with which baptism was to be administered, to baptize, but the *apostles* only, whom He chose out of a vast multitude of His disciples; and to them particularly, as I have before observed, He gave commission to 'go and disciple all nations, baptizing them.' So also, when He instituted the holy eucharist, He did not commit the ministration of it to all His disciples, but only to *the twelve;* and to them only He said, 'THIS

DO'—that is, consecrate bread and wine, and distribute it, as I have now done—'in remembrance of me.' The apostles on neither of these occasions met our Saviour by accident, but by appointment. Whereas if He had intended to have commissioned *more* for either of these purposes, He could as easily have ordered more to have attended Him upon either of these occasions. But by not requiring their attendance, and at the same time requiring that of the apostles, He *plainly excluded* all the rest. I know it is objected that a bare omission in this case does not amount to a prohibition; and, therefore, since our Saviour only forbore to command, but did not prohibit His other disciples to administer His sacraments, we have no ground from Scripture to say that none but *bishops*, as *successors* to the apostles, may minister them, or that if any others do it, they are invalid, and of no effect whatsoever. But we answer, that *an omission in this case does amount to a prohibition;* for wherever a commission is necessary to authorise an act, whosoever is *left out* of the commission is unauthorised, and therefore cannot perform that act so as to make it *valid.* I never could understand that a prince, when he granted a commission to levy, or any other commission whatsoever, did expressly, or in direct terms, forbid any other to do what he authorised those to do whom he did commission; for a commission is always given to authorise a man to do that which, without such commission, neither he nor any one else has otherwise a right to do. There was, therefore, no occasion for our Saviour to prohibit others from administering His sacraments, since the authorising some, and not others, was itself, in the nature of the thing, as full a prohibition as if He had forbade them to do these things in express words. Now, the promises of God with relation to the sacraments, at least to the sacrament of *baptism*, are not made to the act itself, but to the persons by whom that sacrament is ordered to be administered; for Christ does not say, 'I am with the act of baptizing or washing in the name of the Father,' &c.; but He says, 'Lo, I am with *you* alway, with *you* my apostles, with *you* whom I have commissioned to minister baptism, and with *your successors* to the end of the world.' The promise being, therefore, not made to the bare baptism or washing with water, but to the apostles and their successors who were commissioned to minister that sacrament, those that are not baptized by persons so commissioned have no promise to depend upon that they have

received Christ's baptism; and, therefore, for any to believe that they have received it, is not *faith*, but *presumption;* and being 'not of faith,' St Paul tells us 'it is sin.' It is sin in the person who pretends to *administer* it, for he takes upon him an office unto which God has not called him; he acts without authority, and presumptuously supposes God will ratify that which He has given him no commission to do. It is also sin in the person who *receives* it from one whom he knows to have no commission to give it, for he also is presumptuous, and expects a blessing where God has made no promise of any. Any pretended baptism, therefore, ministered by such as have no commission, is destitute of this promise; and being so, is of no effect or validity, for it is not *Christ's baptism*, but a baptism of *human invention*." *

§ 22. The attentive reader will easily observe that Dr Brett, when he wrote the above, was on his road to *Rome;* taking, however, *positive precepts*, which always imply their negative, for his guide. And had he completed his journey, he and his *principles* would have met with the most cordial welcome. For by such principles the papal chair is supported, and the whole structure of the Holy Catholic Church can boast of a similar foundation. "Yes, whether it be an assembly of presbyters or a council of prelates, whether it be the injunction of a pope or the mandate of a prince, by which the inventions of men are incorporated with the appointments of God, they admit of the *same kind* of defence." How Mr B. would answer the above pretended apostolical succession, I will not take upon me to determine; but for my own part, since my Maker and Judge has given me eyes to see, and ears to hear, I would attend to what the Spirit of truth saith unto the churches; I would diligently, and with diffidence, search my Bible, and especially those parts that seem more immediately to refer to these matters; seek light and direction from the Father of lights, who liberally imparts wisdom and prudence profitable to direct; I would examine, reason, *moralise*, *analogise*, and use ALL the means and methods which a gracious God has furnished me with; and, finally, I would shew that the Doctor's foundation, notwithstanding his appeal upon every turn to positive appointment and apostolic practice, is contrary to the genius of the gospel dispensation, and reducible to manifold *absurdities*, which can never be a part of the Divine will.

* Dr Brett's Divine Right of Episcopacy, §§ 9, 25–28.

§ 23. (Third,) But supposing, for argument's sake, these gentlemen could extricate themselves from the above entangling difficulty, it would prove but a temporary relief, for another still greater awaits them. I assert, therefore, in the next place, that it is impossible, on their own avowed principles, whereby they discard from their system all use of *moral* considerations, inference, and analogy, to determine in practice who is a proper *subject* of baptism among adults and who is not; and if so, are not only *liable* to commit sin instead of performing duty, but as often as they perform the action of baptism, they *inevitably* plunge themselves into sin.

Let us not lose sight of that "Divine law," where, *if at all,* we may expect precision with respect to the *qualifications* of the subject. "*Go*—TEACH—*baptize.*" As "this instructive text," says Mr B., "is the first appointment of baptism for the use of the Gentiles, and as it is the law of administration to the end of time, so it cannot but require the most submissive regard; for Jesus Christ, on this occasion, expressly claims 'all authority in heaven and on earth.' He plainly appears as King of Zion, and Sovereign of the world. His language here is not a mere *allusion* to baptism, but it is the *institution* of that ordinance—it is DIVINE LAW; and, therefore, the expressions contained in it must be understood in their natural and obvious meaning, *except any absurdity* would follow such a construction of the sacred statute. As to any *absurdity* following upon it, our opponents pretend none but what implies a begging of the question disputed." * Overlooking a great piece of inconsistency observable in the above paragraph, where it is said that "this text is the *first appointment* of baptism *for the use of the Gentiles,*" implying that it *was before appointed for the use of the Jews,* which is the real fact, though that *first institution* is not mentioned in the evangelic history; and where it is also said, that "this is not a mere *allusion* to baptism, but is *the institution* of that ordinance;" which, if it has any determinate meaning, must imply, by the opposition intended, that it *was not before instituted,* which involves a contradiction. It was not a mere allusion, but *the institution itself* of what was *before instituted.* Passing by this, what, pray, is that disputed question which the Pædobaptists *beg* at the hand of their brethren? Is it the *favour* of disputing about the *qualifications* of subjects

* Page 322.

on *moral* grounds? They have no need to *beg* that; it is their *native right*, as the preceding pages, I presume, do evince, and as the following will further establish. Or is it that the *natural* and *primary* signification of the Greek term, μαθητεύσατε, is, to *disciple* rather than to *teach*? At present I only observe that, whatever advantage would accrue to the cause for which I am pleading from such a *grant* in its favour, Mr B. and his friends will be no great gainers by a peaceful *possession* of what they so highly esteem. My present argument does not require a professed examination of the above question, and therefore let it be now supposed that the word is properly rendered TEACH. I will also grant that Mr B. is in the most proper sense a qualified person to execute Christ's commission, as properly qualified as those to whom the commission was originally given. After all, I insist, it is not in his power to perform his appointed work, to *teach* in order to baptism, but by the aids of moral and analogical reasoning. Without this he will be at a loss about the *kind* and the *degree* of teaching. The word *teach* is vague and indeterminate, because it is not only of various kinds,—about which, however, we will suppose no misunderstanding,—but admits of endless *degrees*. How much teaching is sufficient? The *qualification* of the *taught* is by no means to be measured by the time, the pains, or the abilities employed by the teacher. Some are ever learning without ever coming to the knowledge of the truth; and there are few gospel teachers but have occasion to make that mournful observation. No given degree whatever of skill, of faithfulness, or of laborious diligence in the discharge of his high commission, can enable a teacher to decide who is fit for baptism and who is not. Were a teacher to come to this determination, that each catechumen should be sufficiently qualified when able to recite the Lord's prayer, the ten commandments, and a certain short creed; all this, and much more, may be taught a person while he has not a grain of religion—nay, continuing openly irreligious. And should *such* be baptized? Besides, by what authority could he fix upon such a standard? The object and the end of this teaching, then, is the *moral improvement* of the instructed, of which the teacher is the appointed judge.* But what *positive* precept or example can

* "Admission to baptism lies *solely* in the breast of the *administrator*, who is the *only judge* of qualifications for it, and has the *sole power* of receiving to it, and of rejecting from it."—*Gill's Body of Divinity*, vol. iii., book iii., chap. i.

enable him to do this? *Positive* institutions are of an *external* nature, as before shewn, (§ 6,) and are perfectly distinct in their nature from all *moral* considerations.

§ 24. Mr B. very frequently refers us to the Mosaic ritual as of a *similar* nature with baptism; or, in other words, finds an *analogy* between baptism and those antiquated rites to which he is fond of referring us. And on a certain occasion, when speaking of the signification of terms, he throws down the gauntlet; and, *feeling the ground on which he treads*, exclaims, "We may safely challenge our opposers to produce an instance of this kind out of the Mosaic ritual." * Before we accept the challenge, I would fain learn upon what principle Mr B. draws a *comparison* between baptism and the Jewish ceremonies? how the law that enacts the former *ought* to have anything in it *analogous* to those enforcing the latter? It seems he makes it *requisite* that there should be an *analogy* between these laws; "the whole *being* of which, and all their legitimate connexions, depend on the sovereign pleasure of God." †

But instead of acceding to this proposal of producing an instance out of the Mosaic ritual enjoined in a manner *similar* to what we conceive the latter to be, I beg leave to demand ONE INSTANCE out of all the numerous precepts, which Mr B. calls positive, delivered by Moses to the chosen tribes, that required in the subject a discriminating *moral qualification?* An institution *merely positive*, in regard to the subject, necessarily requires distinguishing marks in him of an *external* nature; a distinction that is sensible, circumstantial, not liable to misconstructions, and, in a word, infallibly characterised; otherwise, the choice of the subject, to whom the rite is to be applied, depends not upon *positive* rules, but *prudential* maxims and *moral* considerations. Hence we may observe, that *those* rites were awfully guarded with temporal, visible *penal sanctions;* which baptism is not. "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that *believeth not,*" or rejects the Redeemer and His salvation, "shall be *damned.*" The neglect of baptism, in proportion as it is a duty, is sinful; but it is guarded with no penal sanction. There appears another important reason why the Mosaic ritual was connected with external characters, as distinguished from moral ones, and also their being guarded by penal threats, and that is, their being *typical*

* Page 33. † Page 460.

of future blessings under the Messiah; but no gospel ordinance, strictly speaking, is a type. On the whole, then, we may observe this remarkable difference between the institutions of the Old Testament and those of the New: the *former* referred, for instance, to persons of such a *sex* and *age*, as circumcision; to persons who had certain *marks* on their bodies, as the cure of the leprosy; to persons who *touched* anything declared to be unclean; to persons who *uttered* certain words, as the blasphemer; to persons who committed certain *actions*, as the manslayer, &c.; but the *latter* refer to *moral* qualities, to certain *dispositions* of mind, to persons in such *circumstances* as are answerable to the *end* and *design* of the institutions, according to the judgment of the administrator. Mr B.'s reasoning, therefore, is of no force when he argues, that because the terms of the Mosaic ritual left nothing to be *inferred*, respecting the qualifications of the *subject*, therefore the same must hold in baptism; and his challenge is impertinent. To discard moral grounds from this controversy, leads to this absurdity, for it is the same as to say, that Christ gave a command to His ministers, in executing which, no *reasoning* or *inference* is at all necessary, and yet without this they are liable to perpetual mistakes. It is like a sovereign giving his representative a *discretionary* commission to treat with a foreign power, but every word of the treaty, he is told, is written and unalterably *fixed*, and must be taken in its strictest meaning; which is the same as to say, The nature of your commission necessarily requires some liberty and latitude, some discretionary power of determining certain points, which cannot possibly be included in these rules and this treaty, and yet you must not recede a hair's-breadth from the particulars therein contained.

§ 25. If it be objected, (what indeed seems to me to be the only objection of any plausibility that can be urged,) "that though our Lord has drawn no line in the command to determine *what degree* of instruction is necessary, yet, according to the letter of the command, *some degree* is requisite;"—to this I reply, that *teaching*, in the present case, is of no further use than a *means* to a moral end. Its *only use* seems to be to discover, produce, or promote a *moral qualification*. This is evident when we consider that if this important *end* is attained, the other is of course superseded; for whether the subject, on our opponents' principle, has been *taught* by another, or has profited, in a solitary way, by

prayer and reading, &c., as a prerequisite qualification, is quite immaterial. The subject *has already* attained to what is a necessary qualification, in the Antipædobaptist sense, and, therefore, teaching for *that end* is unnecessary; which sufficiently shews the weakness and futility of forming an absolute and indispensable connexion between *teaching* and baptizing. The objection, therefore, is of no force, but on supposition that human teaching is a *necessary* means, without which there can be no moral qualification; which is contrary to fact, for it is demonstrable from the concessions of our opponents, that many of the human race are *actually* in possession of that end, to attain which is the sole use of the teaching intended, who yet are not beholden to its aid. Nor can it be denied that there are *other* means of information *besides* what arise from the circumstance of teaching, whereby we may conclude with *sufficient* certainty,—that is, with a certainty *equal* to what teaching can afford us, or equal to any *profession* whatever,—that certain persons are in the *state* of which a profession, as the effect of teaching, is only an indication; except it be maintained that profession is an *infallible* sign, which is absurd.

But, should any one still insist, that a competent knowledge of Christian principles and a credible profession are necessary, I ask, what is the standard of this *competency* or *credibility?* What positive rule can answer this purpose? And again, I ask, *necessary for what?* If the reply be, to answer the nature and design of the institution, it is evident this is only begging the question, as I shall fully shew in the next chapter; where I hope also to demonstrate, that there is nothing in the nature and design of baptism, but is *equally* applicable to the infant child of a believer as to himself, however eminent he may be in faith and piety. Upon the whole, it appears that teaching cannot be any way an *essential* qualification for baptism, and, therefore, is required in certain *circumstances* only.

§ 26. From what has been said it follows, that our opponents, if they act upon their avowed principles, are not only *liable* to commit sin by baptizing an unqualified person, but do *inevitably* commit sin by renouncing and deserting the real and only guide left to conduct us in the path of duty. To baptize the *instructed* would be no duty without attending to the *moral* circumstances of the instruction; and to perform what is *materially* right without an adequate rule, is *morally* an evil, or sinful. It is the ob-

servance of the design and reason, the moral purposes of the command, as it refers to teaching, and not the mere letter of it, that constitutes a teacher's duty. For of two ministers keeping to the letter of the precept in a manner equally strict, one may be performing the intention of the Lawgiver, and the other committing a sin. The office of teaching, therefore, is a discretionary office, to be measured by the *moral* design of the institution to which it refers. How absurd to argue thus:—Omai the savage is *taught* the Paternoster, the ten commandments, the Apostles' Creed; therefore he should be baptized, however destitute of Christian virtue and religion. Yet, on the principle I am opposing, this must be good logic. Now, if we ought to *reject* some candidates for baptism who yet are taught, because not in a state that seems to comport with the design of the institution, we are at liberty, for the same reason, to *admit* others who appear in a condition suited to that design, though not taught, if upon inquiry any such should be found. Whether infants be of that number, will be considered in its proper place.

§ 27. (Fourth,) What innumerable other absurdities would follow from that mode of interpreting Scripture which Mr B. contends for, even in reference to the very commission in question! For instance: "Whosoever believeth and is baptized shall be saved;" Simon the sorcerer believed and was baptized; therefore he is saved. "He that believeth not shall be damned;" infants believe not; therefore (*horribile dictu!*) they shall be damned. "And *these signs* shall follow them that believe: In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover:" but *these signs* have not followed for many ages back; therefore, during all that time, none have believed. Or, on the other hand, many have believed without *these signs* following; therefore, Christ is not true to His word. Again: "Jesus spake nothing but in parables;" but He spake the commission to preach the gospel and to baptize; therefore this commission is a *parable*. The command is not only, "teach all nations," but "preach the gospel to every creature;" (the latter, being last written, explaining the former;) but four-footed beasts, fowls, and fishes, &c., are creatures; therefore it behoved the disciples to preach to *these*. Again, Paul was "not sent to baptize, but to preach the gospel;" but

he baptized Crispus and Gaius, and the household of Stephanas; therefore he did that which he was not sent to do, or acted contrary to his commission, and was blameworthy in baptizing them. How can such a ridiculous mode of reasoning be confuted without *inferential* reasoning?

§ 28. Will any say, that there is no danger of running into such ridiculous inconsistencies; that a very moderate share of common sense, a little sober reason, a small attention to the scope of a passage, and the analogy of faith, would prove a sufficient barrier against the apprehended danger? Very true; this is all we desire. But this is the very barrier which the Antipædobaptists would fain demolish. When Dr S. professedly inquires by what kind of proof we are to be determined in this controversy, he says, "Here I would observe, then, that all positive institutions depend solely upon the will of the institutor, and therefore *in every question relating to them* we are to be guided by his express declarations, or by those of persons he has duly authorised to signify his will. Now this principle granted, I might very properly be excused considering the much greater part of Mr A.'s book, which consists of analogical reasoning; because a *matter of this importance* in its own nature *requires* an express positive declaration."* And Mr Robinson is so well satisfied and pleased with this principle, (however repugnant in its genuine consequences to that freedom of inquiry which on other occasions he professes and adopts, and for which he is reprehended by Mr B. as inconsistent with himself,†) that he looks upon it as a most formidable weapon employed against the Pædobaptists; and publicly compliments his reverend brother, when he says, "Dr Stennett has given the *death-wound* to Mr A.'s arguments for infant baptism by this method."‡ But Mr R. need not be informed that the warlike Achilles was not *invulnerable* any more than the vaunting Goliah. And I am fully persuaded that the *merely positive system*, whatever gigantic and formidable appearance it hath made in the eyes of its votaries, and however loud and strong its defiance, must fall at the feet of sound reason and genuine analogy. Mr B., we may be sure, is otherwise minded. "This maxim," says he, (of adhering to precepts and precedents,) "is a firm barrier against encroachments on the government of Christ by princely domination, priestly pride,

* Answer to Dr A., pp. 3, 6.

† Page 462, *note*.

‡ Notes on Claude, vol. ii., p. 247.

and popular unsteadiness. It guards the throne of our ascended Sovereign, and secures His honour as legislator in His own kingdom. This maxim duly observed, His disciples treat with equal contempt the mandates of a pope and the edicts of a prince, the canons of a council and the statutes of a parliament, whenever they presume to appoint rites of Divine worship, or to *alter those which Christ ordained.*" In reading this paragraph and some others of the same complexion, I could not help smiling at the thought, how well it would suit (*mutatis mutandis*) a Popish doctor in defending—*transubstantiation!* In vain do Protestants wage war against this first-born of absurdities, while it is defended by such a *firm barrier.* Entrenched in *this camp,* the Catholics are secure; having *this* for their *guard,* no arguments can approach them; planting in front this *positive canon,* they defy every assault. In vain do we oppose to their maxim, common sense, the use of reason, moral considerations, the assistance of analogy, &c.; for what has all this to do with a positive institution? "Let the subject of inquiry be *moral* truth, or *moral* duty," may Popish advocates reply, "and we admit inferential proof in as large an extent as any of our opposers; concluding that a *genuine* inference from a moral principle, and relating to things of a moral nature, has all the certainty of the principle itself. But, when a *positive* duty is under our notice, the case is greatly altered. For the inquiry being entirely conversant about the *sovereign pleasure* of God, concerning an article of human faith or duty, which absolutely depends on a *manifestation* of the Divine will; the nature of the case forbids our expecting any intelligence relating to it, except what arises from Divine revelation, precept, or scriptural precedent. Such is the ordinance of the eucharist; such was the system of ritual appointments in former times; and such is the mystery of *transubstantiation,* which is *essential* to the aforesaid ordinance, as it is founded upon the *plain words of institution,* THIS IS MY BODY. Methinks they need but be read, and they must produce conviction, if taken in their plain and *proper* sense. And that they are to be taken in their *proper* sense, in opposition to one that is figurative, is apparent hence, for surely Christ would speak in the *plainest* manner to His disciples, while His language is the *institution* of that ordinance; it is DIVINE LAW. And what is very remarkable, St Paul received of the Lord Jesus, now ascended to glory, what he was to communi-

cate to the churches as of standing obligation till the Lord come, a confirmation of the institution in the self-same words, 'This *is* my body;' whereby the cavils of heretics are for ever confounded. It is true, *before* the consecration it *was bread;* but *after* that it was *His body.* And as to any *absurdity* attending our interpretation, none can be pretended by those who admit, that the Divine WORD *was made* FLESH; and other gospel mysteries equally remote from human comprehension."

§ 29. Mr B., after quoting a passage from Ainsworth's "Arrow against Idolatry," remarks—"By this abstract of the masterly mock apology which the famous Puritan makes for the conduct of Jeroboam, it appears, that the most detestable corruptions of ritual worship admit of a plausible defence, when managed by persons of genius, if you do but allow them the privilege of arguing on *general* principles, as distinguished from positive laws, and on such passages of sacred writ as are *foreign* to the subject in question. It certainly behoves us, therefore, to be exceedingly careful of deserting *positive law* and primitive example, when a ritual ordinance is under consideration; seeing this apology for Jeroboam defies the art of man to confute it on any other ground."* What! cannot *idolatry,* that superlatively detestable *moral evil,* be condemned on *moral* grounds? Would this abomination, this spiritual whoredom, this root of all evil, be an *innocent* thing then, were it not *positively* prohibited? *Credat Judeus.* While the masterly pen of Ainsworth describes *in mockery* the conduct of the idolatrous Jeroboam, on *general* grounds, the learned and eloquent pens of a numerous train of Romish doctors vindicate *in earnest* the doctrine of transubstantiation on POSITIVE ground; and I may with the greatest propriety add, "their apology defies the art of man to confute it," without the aids of inferential and moral reasoning; and that in the case of an institution *confessedly positive.*

A certain anonymous writer, who professes himself an enemy to the corruptions of Popery, after an appeal to *antiquity* and *universality,* to early *Fathers, Councils,* and *Liturgies,* in evidence that the practice of the Church respecting the *eucharistic cup,* was to OFFER WINE MIXED WITH WATER, as best agreeing with the *original institution;* and having observed that this is not the only *essential defect* the Church of England is to be

* Page 472.

charged with in the commemoration of this great mystery, writes to his learned friend as follows:—"Give me leave, therefore, to ask you in what tolerable sense we may be said to retain this institution of our Lord's, when we observe neither the *matter* nor the *form* of it? If it be answered, that we do retain the institution, though maimed in some parts of it; I ask again, whether, in a POSITIVE INSTITUTION, every part of it be not *equally necessary* to be observed, especially when there is nothing in the nature of the things themselves which can produce the effects, but all the benefits we receive thereby are derived to us upon account of our *exact conformity* to the will of him that instituted them? But again, if every part of a *positive institution* be equally necessary, where is the power that can dispense with our non-observance of the foregoing particulars? If there be such a power, that power may dispense with as many more particulars, and so on till the whole be taken away, and then it will follow, that *our Saviour instituted something for a continual remembrance of His death, which might lawfully be taken away before His coming again.*" The reader should observe, that the writer of the above, and the person addressed, both stood on the *merely positive ground*, and accordingly the *latter* so felt the force of the *former's* reasoning on their common principle, that he made the following ingenuous acknowledgment: "To this long objection, &c., I must confess *I know not how to return a satisfactory answer.*"* Here is a man honestly submitting to the strength and evidence of his own avowed principle, however repugnant to *sound analogy* and the *genuine spirit* of the Christian dispensation.

§ 30. The real fact is, that the path of truth is daily transgressed on either side. Some leave the line of duty so slack and entangled, that it proves of little or no use to guide; others draw it to such a *positive tightness*, that it breaks: they surely are best off who cautiously observe the golden mean.

There is, no doubt, in the Divine dispensations, an admirable *analogy* observable, an analogy established and confirmed by uncontested *facts;* nor should we quit the clue afforded by the former, in theological as well as philosophical subjects, but when obliged to do so by the latter. The Supreme Being observes in the works of creation and providence, in the revolutions of states, the rise and fall of empires, and the successive dispensations of

* Brett's Divine Right, &c., Appendix, pp. 189-191.

religion, respectively, a wonderful *proportion;* and who can deny that a due attention to the same, as explained by facts, eminently distinguishes a wise politician from a weak patriot, or a judicious Christian from an enthusiastic bigot? Among the extravagancies of the latter, of which the Christian world furnishes too many instances, not a few are established and supported by the pretended aids of analogical reasoning, while others are beholden to the abused patronage of positive laws. But the real parent of the former is not sober and just *analogy*, but rather a kind of *anomaly;* and that of the latter, *anomy* of lawless breed.

§ 31. (First,) Before I close this part of my subject, I shall take notice of some *objections* that may be made, beside those already anticipated, to what has been delivered in the preceding pages, whether in itself or in its consequences. And, first, it may be objected, "If the preceding account be true, that baptism is not an institution *merely positive*, as much so as any enacted under the Mosaic dispensation, then the present economy hath no institutions at all of that kind." This objection supposes—

(1.) That precepts of a positive nature under the Mosaic dispensation, were absolutely so in all their circumstances; so as not to leave anything to be inferred by the person or persons concerned, in the discharge of the duty enjoined. But if these things were so, if the Jewish ritual was so express as to leave nothing to be determined by inference, one might well wonder whence could spring so many Targums and Talmuds, so many voluminous works intended to explain and illustrate the various circumstances attending the performance of these *positive duties* among others. Are not these *unprescribed circumstances* of ritual worship, and other positive injunctions, what in a great degree swell the interpretations of the Rabbins? The truth is, that there were many precepts under the Jewish economy positive in a *considerable degree*, relative to the *subject* as well as the mode of an institute, and respecting the former it was sometimes particularly scrupulous, for reasons already assigned (§ 24); but it does not follow that ANY ONE of these was so strictly positive as not to take some things for *granted* respecting the circumstances of the duty, such as national custom, the common dictates of sense and reason, traditionary knowledge, the general principles of the law of nature, &c. And it should not be forgotten, that the administrator of the Jewish rites had the subjects distinguished and characterised in a *sensible*

manner, which qualification was to be determined by the same sort of evidence as any *facts* in common life. But the administrator of the Christian rites has no such grounds to proceed on; his commission is of a *discretionary* nature, arising from the nature and design of the institutions themselves, as before shewn, (§ 23.)

(2.) The objection again supposes, that there is some *excellency* in an institution being merely and absolutely positive, more than in one of a mixed nature. But this supposition is vain and erroneous. For what conceivable superior excellency can there be in any precept or duty on account of its *positiveness?* Were there any force in the objection, it would imply that the Christian dispensation is *less excellent* than the Mosaic, as having fewer positive rites, and their proportion of positiveness being also smaller. And it would also imply, that the reasonable duties of prayer and praise, as founded on the law of nature, as well as more fully enjoined by revelation, were *less excellent* than baptism and the Lord's supper; and it would follow, that the services of the Church triumphant are in their own nature *less excellent* than those of the Church militant; which are consequences from the force of the objection equally genuine and absurd. Our Lord's answer respecting the first and great commandment, shews at once that what is the most *important* duty, is also the most *natural*, and, therefore, the most remote from what is merely positive; and that is, the *love of God*. This matter has been fully shewn before, (§ 4.) In one word, the spirit of the objection is truly pharisaic.

§ 32. (Second,) Some may perhaps object, "That this has been always admitted as true, that baptism and the Lord's supper are positive institutions of the New Testament; and that many Pædobaptists have availed themselves of this fort, in ascertaining the nature and enforcing the obligation of the latter, and particularly Bishop Hoadley. And as his Lordship's principle, in his 'Plain Account of the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper,' has been deemed unanswerable, Mr Foot, Dr Stennett, and others, have taken but the same method in treating about baptism." To this I reply—

That, as principles taken upon trust, dignified titles, and lawn sleeves, are light as a feather in the scale of argument; so, on the other hand, I am satisfied the Bishop of Winchester's positions, taken in a sound sense, nay, the *only* consistent sense in which they can be taken, are evidently true and important. The sum is this: "That all positive duties, or duties made such by institution

alone, depend entirely upon the will and declaration of the person who institutes or ordains them, with respect to the real design and end of them, and, consequently, to the due manner of performing them." This is strictly true, *in the degree that any duties are positive*, but no further. And to denominate a precept or duty *positive*, though but *partially* so, I have no objection, for the sake of distinguishing them from such as are merely moral, and evidently founded on the reason and nature of things. "Except we observe this caution," as Bishop Butler observes, "we shall be in danger of running into endless confusion."

§ 33. (Third,) It may be said, "If we resign this maxim, that a positive precept or duty excludes all moral reasoning, analogy, and inference, we open a door to numberless innovations, and deprive ourselves of a necessary barrier against the encroachments of Popery, &c." * In reply to this specious objection let it be observed—

(1.) That this maxim, whatever confidence our opponents place in it, is a very *insufficient* barrier for the defence of truth, if the objection implies that it is calculated to defend truth against error, and not error against truth as well. For it is notorious that there is hardly any extravagance in the whole compass of the distinguishing peculiarities of religious practice, that is not barricadoed by this very maxim. If Protestants use it against Papists, Papists in their turn use it against Protestants. If the Quakers are pursued and foiled when they occasionally quit this fort, they soon rally their controversial forces, and, entrenching themselves behind the strength of this maxim, the *warless race* becomes again *victorious*. Whence passive obedience and non-resistance? Whence an opposition to all *forensic* swearing, in common with profane? Whence the Quakers' nonconformity to what other serious Christians consider as lawful? Their peculiar mode of salutation and address? Their method of conducting religious worship? The little stress they lay on the observance of the Christian Sabbath? &c. Whence the Popish absurd figment of transubstantiation,† apostolical succession,‡ extreme unction? &c. On the contrary—

(2.) Not to distinguish between the *positiveness* and *morality* of a precept, ordinance, or duty, and not to ascertain their respective *degrees*, and to deny that the *latter* distinction admits of moral reasoning, inference, and analogy, open a wide door to

* Thus Mr B., pp. 190, 443, &c. † See § 28. ‡ See § 21.

bigotry, and numberless glaring abuses of the sacred oracles. By rejecting the analogy of faith and the *design* of Scripture herein, we give the most effectual encouragement to every senseless intrusion. And what is still more remarkable is, that the *more firmly* any one adheres to the undistinguishing positive scheme, in reference to any Christian ordinance whatever, the more closely will he be allied to the interest of genuine bigotry. For it has a direct tendency to make the unprescribed circumstances of a positive rite *essential* to the rite itself, and consequently to make that necessary and essential which the institutor has not made so. How far this is applicable to the Antipædobaptist's cause will be further considered. The doctrine that teaches the propriety of yielding our reason to positive institutions *as such*, or in the *degree* they are so, is just and proper, as founded on the sovereign, absolute, and manifest authority of the Supreme Legislator; and in this view it has been of singular service in refuting the cavils of deistical impiety. But to carry the principle any further, tends to betray the cause of Christianity into the hands of infidels, and to breed unhallowed party zeal and uncharitable animosities among its sincerest professors. "For who are most likely to put weapons into the hands of *infidels;* they who seem to discard *reason* in the investigation of truth, or they whose researches are founded on her most vigorous exertions, and most rational decisions? they who make Scripture bow to their preconceived notions, in direct opposition to the dictates of reason and common sense, or they whose arguments are founded upon a *coalition* of Scripture and right reason?"* Once more—

(3.) The objection, as it includes Mr B.'s favourite maxim, and tends to oppose the distinction above stated, involves a great inconsistence with itself. For on what principle, except what they affect to discard, do our opponents retain *some* of the positive rites of the New Testament and reject *others?* Why regard *baptism* and the *eucharist* as of standing obligation, while the *pedilavium* and *feasts of charity* (the *former* enjoined expressly by our Lord, and *both* practised by the disciples of the apostolic age, see John xiii. 14, 15, 1 Tim. v. 10, Jude 12) are judged unworthy of continuance? Why receive *females* to communion, or adopt the *first* day of the week for the Christian Sabbath? How can they justify their conduct in these matters, these circumstances of *posi-*

* De Courcy's Rejoinder, p. 252.

tive institutions, without undermining their own avowed hypothesis? With regard to the Sabbath, indeed, the Antipædobaptists are divided among themselves; while some are content with the *first* day of the week, others observe the *seventh.* On this point Dr S. is very open and ingenuous: Mr Addington appeals to an objecting Antipædobaptist, "whether he does not think himself sufficiently authorised to keep the Christian Sabbath, though Christ has nowhere said in so many words, 'Remember the first day of the week to keep it holy?'"* To this the Doctor replies, "There is, I acknowledge, some weight in this objection; and all I can say to it is, that not having yet met with any passage in the New Testament that appears to me to have repealed the fourth commandment, and to have required the observation of the first day, I cannot think myself sufficiently authorised to renounce that, and to keep this."† If the Doctor is professedly an observer of the Jewish Sabbath, he is consistent with himself, however different from so great a part of the Christian world; if *not,* he and his tenet are at variance; analogy and inferential reasoning have got the better of the positive system, which nevertheless must not be resigned, for fear of worse consequences.

§ 34. (Fourth,) Another objection much insisted on is, "If our Lord has left anything to be *inferred* relative to the *subject* and *mode* of baptism, being a positive institute; or if He has not delivered Himself *expressly* and *clearly* in everything, respecting the question, *who* are to be baptized, and the manner *how;* it implies a reflection on His wisdom and goodness." But this objection is impertinent on different accounts. For—

(1.) Its force is derived from the supposition that the Institutor was somehow *obliged* to make His will known to men by one method only. But is the Great Supreme under any such obligations to His absolutely dependent creatures? What should we say of a philosopher, who, having to judge of any important phenomenon in physics, should quarrel with the Author of nature, because He had not confined His method of information to *one* source only, to the exclusion of all others? That His evidence, for instance, was not confined to the information of *sense,* to the exclusion of *reason* and *analogy?* Or what should we say of a person, who, having to decide on the truth and reality of a miracle,

* The Christian Minister's Reasons, &c., p. 143.

† Answer to Dr A., p. 177.

should impeach the wisdom and goodness of his Maker, because He did not appeal to *one* sense only of His dependent and unworthy creatures,—that of *seeing*, for instance, to the exclusion of that of *hearing?* The answer is plain, and the application easy.

(2.) The objection is guilty of another impertinence, nearly allied to the former: it unreasonably requires *positive* evidence for what is discoverable by *other* means. It is demonstrable, and I think has been demonstrated, that the qualifications of the subjects of baptism (the *mode* also will be examined in its place) is what cannot possibly be determined by any positive rule whatever as such, but must be resolved to the *discretionary* nature of the commission, or the supposed *wisdom* and *prudence* of the administrators, in common with other parts of the same commission, such as the choice of an *audience*, the choice of a concionatory *subject*, &c. "Preach the gospel to every creature," is a part of the commission, but the execution has no *positive* rule. Nor does this commission of preaching the *gospel* prohibit preaching the *law*, for a lawful use, or any branch of natural religion, notwithstanding Mr B.'s excluding standard, that "positive laws imply their negative." In like manner, the commission to baptize *believers* and the *taught*, we contend and prove, does not mean to include *all sorts* of believers and taught persons, but such of them as the administrators judge fit, according to the rules of Christian prudence and discretion. And we further insist, as shall be more fully shewn hereafter, that the terms of the commission, *believers* and *taught*, stand *opposed*, not to *non-believers* and *untaught*, but to *unbelievers* and persons *perversely ignorant*. What, therefore, falls *necessarily* to the province of inferential reasoning, is impertinently referred to a positive standard.

(3.) The objection implies an *ungrateful* reflection on the Institutor's wisdom and goodness, contrary to what it pretends to avoid. And this it does, by counteracting and vilifying those natural dictates of reason, prudence, and common sense, that our all-wise and beneficent Creator has given us; His *goodness*, in not suspending their operations, but leaving them in full force, as to these circumstances of positive duties; His *wisdom*, in grafting what is positive of His laws on these common principles; and, finally, the favourable circumstance of His diminishing the degree of positiveness in New Testament institutions, as well as their number.

§ 35. Let us now recapitulate what has been said in this chapter. From an investigation of the *nature* of positive precepts and duties, as distinguished from *moral* ones, together with their *comparative* obligations and importance, we have seen, that, in any case of supposed competition, the *latter* claims an undoubted *preference.* We have also seen, that nothing but absolute, decisive, *discernible authority* can turn the scale in favour of the *former*, or, indeed, place any law or duty in the rank of POSITIVE. Moreover, it has been shewn, that every duty resulting from any discernible *moral relation*, must needs be classed among *moral duties;* that some things appertaining to the very *essence* of baptism, on our opponents' own principles, are of moral consideration—particularly the qualifications of proper subjects; consequently, that baptism is an ordinance of a *mixed nature*, partly positive and partly moral. Of all which an unavoidable consequence is, that our opponents' outcry against all *moral* and *analogical reasons* in our inquiries respecting the subjects and mode of baptism, is impertinent and absurd, and to a demonstration contradictory to their own avowed principles. The most material, I believe, of the *objections* that may be urged against my principles, have been answered. And this I can sincerely aver, that I have not intentionally concealed one objection, that has been or may be advanced, on account of any apprehended force therein. On the contrary, I have purposely and studiously sought out what appeared to me the *most forcible.* And I am satisfied that no objection *can be* fairly made, which is not capable of a fair and full answer, and which will not eventually contribute to illustrate and establish what I here contend for.

Having now fixed upon the spot, cleared the rubbish, and laid the foundation, I proceed to the superstructure, and first of all to investigate the *nature and design* of the baptismal rite.

CHAPTER II.

OF THE NATURE AND DESIGN OF BAPTISM: CONTAINING AN ACCOUNT OF THE FACTS, BLESSINGS, AND OBLIGATIONS REPRESENTED BY IT, IMPARTIALLY DEDUCED FROM ALL THE PASSAGES IN THE NEW TESTAMENT RELATING TO IT.

§ 1. The best method to find the nature and design of baptism. § 2–7. (First,) Those passages of Scripture that speak of baptism in direct terms. § 8. (Second,) Those that are supposed to allude to this ordinance. § 9. Axioms of interpretation. § 10–12. (First,) The difference between the baptism of John and that of Christ. § 13. (Second,) Their agreement. § 14. The general nature of baptism. § 15–17. (First,) The blessings exhibited by it. § 18–21. (Second,) Obligations resulting from it. § 22. General conclusions: —(First,) Baptism obliges to some duties, and exhibits some benefits not expressly mentioned in Scripture,—benefits and obligations being correlates. § 23–35. (Second,) The propriety of denominating baptism a seal of the covenant. § 36. And, of consequence, the Lord's Supper. § 37. (Third,) The unworthiness of minister or subject does not nullify the ordinance. § 38. (Fourth,) To renounce infant baptism, as such, by a desire of rebaptizing, militates against the very nature and design of the ordinance. § 39. (Fifth,) It is not necessarily attended with spiritual communications. § 40–42. (Sixth,) The death, burial, and resurrection of Christ not the principal facts represented by baptism.

§ 1. THOUGH I have said so much in vindication of inferential proof and just analogy in controversial debates about institutions *partially* positive, as baptism is shewn to be, I am far from desiring to evade the force of *anything* recorded in the New Testament relative to this ordinance; on the contrary, the rules laid down in the preceding chapter require that we should very carefully attend to *revealed facts* before all other considerations, as all reasonings that may contradict these must needs be false and impertinent. It would be ridiculous to borrow the aids of analogy, while investigating any subject whatever, in *opposition*

to plain facts: for as an hypothesis in philosophy is justly exploded when the system-maker, in whose brain it was fabricated, forcibly drags all phenomena into its vortex, in defiance of well-attested observations and experiments; so that system in divinity, whether it comprehends the whole body of it or any particular part, must needs be precarious and vain when it *contradicts* revealed incontestable facts; and it is no less evident that the pretensions of any hypothesis must be equally futile in proportion as it is *inconsistent* with itself. To avoid these inconveniences, I know of no better method in general than that which an ingenious writer on this subject has adopted, in a small treatise which he calls, "A Plain Account of the Ordinance of Baptism,"* and that is: to lay together all the texts in the New Testament relating to it, that from these, as so many *data*, we may deduce the nature and design of the institution, and learn everything else that the Institutor hath been pleased to *reveal* concerning it. And this method I the rather adopt, not only because it is proper and rational in itself, but likewise cannot be objected to consistently by any of our opponents. The author of the "Plain Account" produces *first* the passages concerning John's baptism, and *secondly* those that refer to Christ's baptism, and inserts promiscuously those passages that only *allude* to the baptismal rite. I shall attempt, however, a slight improvement of his arrangement, by placing *first* all the passages in the New Testament that speak of BAPTISM in direct terms and in whatever connexion, and *secondly* those texts that are supposed to *allude* to the institution. This, I think, is less exceptionable, since the classing of the texts in the manner he does seems to imply an essential difference between the baptism of John and that of Christ, as a circumstance taken for granted before the inquiry is made.

§ 2. (First,) Let us begin with those passages that speak of BAPTISM in direct terms and in whatever connexion. Matt. iii. 5–7, "Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan, and were *baptized* of him in Jordan, confessing their sins. But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his *baptism*, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?" Ver. 11, "I indeed *baptize* you with water unto

* Anonymous, but generally ascribed to Mr Foot of Bristol; addressed to Bishop Hoadley in a series of letters.

repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall *baptize* you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire." Ver. 13–16, "Then cometh Jesus from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be *baptized* of him. But John forbade him, saying, I have need to be *baptized* of thee, and comest thou to me? And Jesus answering said unto him, Suffer it to be so now: for thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness. Then he suffered him. And Jesus, when he was *baptized*, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove, and lighting upon him." Chap. xx. 22, 23, "But Jesus answered and said, Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of, and to be *baptized* with the *baptism* that I am *baptized* with? They say unto him, We are able. And he saith unto them, Ye shall indeed drink of my cup, and be *baptized* with the *baptism* that I am *baptized* with: but to sit on my right hand, and on my left, is not mine to give; but it shall be given to them for whom it is prepared of my Father." Chap. xxi. 25, "The *baptism* of John, whence was it? from heaven, or of men? And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; he will say unto us, Why did ye not then believe him?" Chap. xxviii. 19, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, *baptizing* them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."

§ 3. Mark i. 4, 5, "John did *baptize* in the wilderness, and preach the *baptism* of repentance for the remission of sins. And there went out unto him all the land of Judea, and they of Jerusalem, and were all *baptized* of him in the river of Jordan, confessing their sins." Ver. 8–10, "I indeed have *baptized* you with water: but he shall *baptize* you with the Holy Ghost. And it came to pass in those days, that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was *baptized* of John in Jordan. And straightway coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens opened, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon him." Chap. vii. 4, "And when they come from the market, except they wash, [Gr., *baptize*,] they eat not. And many other things there be which they have received to hold, as the washing [Gr., *baptizing*] of cups, and pots, and of brazen vessels, and of tables." Chap. xi. 30, "The *baptism* of John, was it from heaven, or of men? answer me." Chap. xvi. 15, 16, "And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world,

and preach the gospel to every creature. He that believeth and is *baptized* shall be saved."

§ 4. Luke iii. 3, "And he came into all the country about Jordan, preaching the *baptism* of repentance for the remission of sins." Ver. 7, "Then said he to the multitude that came forth to be *baptized* of him, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?" Ver. 12–14, "Then came also publicans to be *baptized*, and said unto him, Master, what shall we do? And he said unto them, Exact no more than that which is appointed you. And the soldiers likewise demanded of him, saying, And what shall we do? And he said unto them, Do violence to no man, neither accuse any falsely; and be content with your wages." Ver. 16, "John answered, saying unto them all, I indeed *baptize* you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: he shall *baptize* you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire." Ver. 21, 22, "Now when all the people were *baptized*, it came to pass, that Jesus also being *baptized*, and praying, the heaven was opened, and the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape like a dove upon him, and a voice came from heaven which said, Thou art my beloved Son; in thee I am well pleased." Chap. vii. 29, 30, "And all the people that heard him, and the publicans, justified God, being *baptized* with the *baptism* of John. But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not *baptized* of him." Chap. xi. 38, "And when the Pharisee saw it, he marvelled that he had not first washed [Gr., *baptized*] before dinner." Chap. xii. 50, "But I have a *baptism* to be *baptized* with, and how am I straitened till it be accomplished!" Chap. xx. 4, "The *baptism* of John, was it from heaven, or of men?"

§ 5. John i. 25, 26, "And they asked him, and said unto him, Why *baptizest* thou then, if thou be not that Christ, nor Elias, neither that prophet? John answered them, saying, I *baptize* with water." Ver. 28, "These things were done in Bethabara beyond Jordan, where John was *baptizing*." Ver. 31, "And I knew him not: but that he should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come *baptizing* with water." Ver. 33, "He that sent me to *baptize* with water, the same said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the Spirit descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which *baptizeth* with the Holy Ghost." Chap. iii. 22, 23, "After

these things came Jesus and his disciples into the land of Judea: and there he tarried with them, and *baptized.* And John also was *baptizing* in Ænon, near to Salim, because there was much water there; and they came, and were *baptized.*" Ver. 26, "And they came unto John, and said unto him, Rabbi, he that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou barest witness, behold, the same *baptizeth,* and all men come to him." Chap. iv. 1, 2, "When therefore the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and *baptized* more disciples than John, (though Jesus himself *baptized* not, but his disciples.)" Chap. x. 40, "And went away again beyond Jordan, into the place where John at first *baptized;* and there he abode."

§ 6. Acts i. 5, "For John truly *baptized* with water; but ye shall be *baptized* with the Holy Ghost not many days hence." Ver. 22, "Beginning from the *baptism* of John, unto that same day that he was taken up from us." Chap. ii. 38, 39, "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be *baptized* every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the promise is unto you, and to your children, and to all that are afar off, even as many as the Lord our God shall call." Ver. 41, "Then they that gladly received his word were *baptized:* and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls." Chap. viii. 12–17, "But when they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, they were *baptized,* both men and women. Then Simon himself believed also: and when he was *baptized,* he continued with Philip, and wondered, beholding the miracles and signs that were done. Now when the apostles which were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent unto them Peter and John: who, when they were come down, prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost. (For as yet he was fallen upon none of them: only they were *baptized* in the name of the Lord Jesus.) Then laid they their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost." Ver. 36–38, "And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be *baptized?* And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both

Philip and the eunuch; and he *baptized* him." Chap. ix. 18, "And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales; and he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was *baptized*." Chap. x. 37, 38, "That word, I say, you know, which was published throughout all Judea, and began from Galilee, after the *baptism* which John preached; how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost," &c. Ver. 47, 48, "Can any man forbid water, that these should not be *baptized*, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be *baptized* in the name of the Lord." Chap. xi. 15, 16, "And as I began to speak, the Holy Ghost fell on them, as on us at the beginning. Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how that he said, John indeed *baptized* with water; but ye shall be *baptized* with the Holy Ghost." Chap. xiii. 23–25, "Of this man's seed hath God according to his promise raised unto Israel a Saviour, Jesus: when John had first preached before his coming the *baptism* of repentance to all the people of Israel. And as John fulfilled his course, he said, Whom think ye that I am? I am not he." Chap. xvi. 15, "And when she [Lydia] was *baptized*, and her household, she besought us," &c. Ver. 33, "And he [the jailor] took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was *baptized*, he and all his, straightway." Chap. xviii. 8, "And Crispus, the chief ruler of the synagogue, believed on the Lord with all his house; and many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were *baptized*." Ver. 25, "He [Apollos] spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the *baptism* of John." Chap. xix. 3–5, "And he said unto them, Unto what then were ye *baptized?* And they said, Unto John's *baptism*. Then said Paul, John verily *baptized* with the *baptism* of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus. When they heard this, they were *baptized* in the name of the Lord Jesus." Chap. xxii. 16, "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be *baptized*, and wash away thy sins, calling on the name of the Lord."

§ 7. Rom. vi. 3, 4, "Know ye not, that so many of us as were *baptized* into Jesus Christ were *baptized* into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by *baptism* into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life." 1 Cor. i. 13–17,

"Were ye *baptized* in the name of Paul? I thank God that I *baptized* none of you, but Crispus and Gaius; lest any should say that I had *baptized* in mine own name. And I *baptized* also the household of Stephanas; besides, I know not whether I *baptized* any other. For Christ sent me not to *baptize*, but to preach the gospel." Chap. x. 2, "And were all *baptized* unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea." Chap. xii. 13, "For by one Spirit are we all *baptized* into one body, whether we be Jews or Gentiles, whether we be bond or free; and have been all made to drink into one Spirit." Chap. xv. 29, "Else what shall they do that are *baptized* for the dead, if the dead rise not at all? why are they then *baptized* for the dead?" Gal. iii. 27, "For as many of you as have been *baptized* into Christ have put on Christ." Eph. iv. 5, "One *baptism*." Col. ii. 12, "Buried with him in *baptism*, wherein also ye are risen with him." Heb. vi. 2, "The doctrine of *baptisms*." Chap. ix. 10, "Which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers washings, [Gr., *baptisms*,] and carnal ordinances, imposed on them until the time of reformation." 1 Pet. iii. 21, "The like figure whereunto even *baptism* doth also now save us, (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ." Rev. xix. 13, "And he was clothed with a vesture dipt in [Gr., *baptized* in or with] blood."

§ 8. (Second,) I shall now produce those passages that are supposed to *allude* to the ordinance of baptism, though the *term* be not used:—John iii. 5, "Except a man be born of *water* and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." Ver. 25, "Then there arose a question between some of John's disciples and the Jews about *purifying*." 1 Cor. vi. 11, "But ye are *washed*." Eph. v. 26, "That he might sanctify and cleanse it with the *washing of water* by the word." Tit. iii. 5, "According to his mercy he saved us, by the *washing* of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost." Heb. x. 22, "Our bodies *washed* with pure water." 2 Pet. i. 9, "And hath forgotten that he was *purged* from his old sins." Rev. i. 5, "Unto him that loved us, and *washed* us from our sins in his own blood."

Perhaps the following texts, and some others, allude to the Christian purification:—Tit. ii. 14, "And *purify* to himself a peculiar people." James iv. 8, "*Cleanse* your hands, ye sinners; and *purify* your hearts, ye double-minded." 1 Pet. i. 22, "Seeing

ye have *purified* your souls in obeying." 2 Cor. vii. 1, "Let us *cleanse* ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit." 1 John i. 7, "The blood of Jesus Christ *cleanseth* us from all sin." Ver. 9, "To *cleanse* us from all unrighteousness." May I not add—Acts ii. 33, "Having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath *shed* forth this, which ye now see and hear." Rom. v. 5, "The love of God is *shed* abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost." Tit. iii. 6, "Which he *shed* on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour." Acts x. 45, "On the Gentiles also was *poured* out the gift of the Holy Ghost," &c.

§ 9. Before I proceed to consider these passages, I would propose the following remarks as axioms of interpretation:—

(1.) Every one of these texts, separately considered in its proper connexion, must have one principal design and determinate meaning.

(2.) As they all proceed from the same infallible source, they must have one general meaning collectively in which they all agree.

(3.) That cannot be the design and meaning of any particular text which is *contrary* to this general design, or even contrary to any other passage which is more evident than itself.

(4.) That is to be deemed the general meaning of these passages, and their true interpretation, which most unexceptionably harmonises with the whole revealed will of God, which is ever consistent with itself.

(5.) As the law of nature—viz., that rule of action which derives its being from the *nature* of God and man, and the *relation* thence arising—was never superseded as useless under any dispensation of religion, but, on the contrary, always remained in force, and ever will remain; no interpretation of these texts, or indeed any other, should be admitted as true which *seems* to offer violence to this law of nature, otherwise called the moral law, except it be supported by the clear, indubitable, positive authority of God. The reason is evident; for as this law of nature is always binding in every part of the globe, and through every period of time, whatever appears to be *probably* conformable to it, or a faithful dictate of it, every man is laid under a proportionable obligation to obey its voice, until an infallible authority interposes, ushered in with *stronger evidence* against the former supposed probability, from whose decisive verdict there lies no appeal. This

I the rather insist upon, because it may serve to explain the genuine meaning of a maxim on which Mr B. lays considerable stress—viz., "Positive laws imply their negative."* Positive duties, as far as, or in the respect that, they are *positive*,—that is, having no apparent reason to recommend them but the *mere authority* of the Lawgiver,—imply their negatives, for this reason, that no law whatever, on the supposition, enjoins these negatives. Not the *natural* or moral law, for then they would not be ranked among positive duties; not any *positive* law, for then the term *negative* would be inapplicable. On the contrary, whatever appears, upon the whole, a *moral* duty, cannot with any propriety be termed the *negative* of any positive duty.

§ 10. (First,) I shall now make some observations on the foregoing texts. And it is obvious, in the first place, that there is some *difference* between the baptism of John and that of Christ and His apostles.

(1.) The immediate *Institutor* of John's baptism was God the *Father:* John i. 33, "He that sent me to baptize with water, the SAME said unto me, Upon whom thou shalt see the *Spirit* descending, and remaining on him, the same is he which baptizeth with the Holy Ghost." Here we see that He who sent John to baptize was a Divine Person distinct from the Son and Spirit; who must be therefore the Father. But the immediate *Institutor* of the Christian baptism, which is of perpetual obligation, is Christ the *Son* of God: John iii. 22, "After these things came Jesus and his disciples into the land of Judea; and there he tarried with them, and baptized." Ver. 26, "And they came unto John, and said unto him, Rabbi, he that was with thee beyond Jordan, to whom thou barest witness, behold, the same baptizeth, and all men come to him," &c. Matt. xxviii. 19, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them," &c. From these passages we observe, that Christ was the *Institutor* of baptism *before* His death; and more explicitly before His ascension.

(2.) John's baptism was a *preparatory* rite, referring the subjects to Christ, who was about to confer upon them spiritual blessings: Matt. iii. 11, "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but he that cometh after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire." Mark i. 8, "I indeed have baptized

* Vol. ii., p. 53.

you with water: but he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost." Luke iii. 16, "John answered, saying unto them all, I indeed baptize you with water; but one mightier than I cometh, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to unloose: he shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost, and with fire." John i. 31, "And I knew him not: but that he should be made manifest to Israel, *therefore* am I come baptizing with water." Acts i. 5, "For John truly baptized with water; but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost not many days hence." Chap. xix. 4, "Then said Paul, John verily baptized with the baptism of repentance, saying unto the people, that they should believe on him which should come after him, that is, on Christ Jesus," &c. The Christian baptism was an actual *initiation* into the Messiah's visible kingdom: Acts ii. 41, "Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were ADDED unto them about three thousand souls." This *addition* was to the number of the *disciples* and *subjects* of Christ; for *then*, when they were *baptized*, were they reckoned among His followers. The baptism of John did not actually introduce any into the gospel kingdom, or make them disciples of Christ; but those whom John baptized were properly his own disciples, and expectants of the Messiah's blessings. Whereas those whom Jesus ordered to be baptized, were strictly *His* disciples, and were taught to expect the promise of the Spirit, in His various gifts and graces.

(3.) It appears from the texts first recited, that the baptism of John was confined to the Jews, and temporary: Matt. iii. 5–7, &c. But the Christian baptism was common to Jews and Gentiles, and of standing obligation: John iii. 26, "The same baptizeth, and *all men* come unto him." Matt. xxviii. 19; Mark xvi. 15, 16, &c.

(4.) It does not appear that John had any *formula* of administration; nor, indeed, have we any account of his *commission*, but what may be inferred from what he says, John i. 33, "He that SENT me to baptize with water." And we may further infer that his baptism was FROM HEAVEN, from what our Lord says to the chief priests and elders of the people, Matt. xxi. 25, &c. Whence it appears that he was *divinely* authorised, and, as before observed, that the *Father* was the Institutor. But the Christian baptism has a *formula* of administration: Matt. xxviii. 19, "IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE SON, AND OF THE HOLY GHOST." And still shorter, Acts ii. 31, "Be baptized every one of you IN

THE NAME OF JESUS CHRIST." Also, chap. x. 38, "IN THE NAME OF THE LORD."

(5.) It may be added, that the baptism of John was the concluding scene of the *legal* dispensation, and in fact part of it. Hence the least in the kingdom of God, viz., the gospel kingdom, was greater than he. It may be considered as a final and general purification, performed by John as the last priest. That he discharged his office as a purifying priest to the thousands of Israel, see Acts xiii. 23–25. Thus John went before Jesus in the spirit and power of Elias, (as promised Mal. iv. 5,) "to turn the hearts of the fathers with the children to him, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just; to make ready a people prepared for the Lord." (See Luke i. 17.) Christian baptism is the regular entrance into, and is a part of the *evangelical* dispensation: Gal. iii. 27, "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ, have put on Christ," &c.

(6.) It does not appear from the inspired narrative (however probable from inferential reasoning) that any but John *himself* was engaged as operator in his baptism; whereas Christ Himself baptized none, but His *disciples* by His authority and in His name, (John iv. 2.)

§ 11. Some have supposed another distinction between the baptism of John and that of Christ: viz., that the *latter* had an immediate reference to the *Holy Spirit*, requiring of the baptized faith in Him as a Divine Person, and an expectation of His promised influence; that the *former* had no respect *at all* to that Divine Person, nor supposed any information concerning Him; in proof of which they urge Acts xix. 2. That Christian baptism has an immediate relation to the promise of the Spirit exhibited in the gospel dispensation, I grant and maintain; but that any baptized by John (or even his disciples) should be so grossly ignorant as not to know anything about the Holy Ghost, or never to have *heard* of Him, is highly improbable. There is nothing upon the subject more expressly and emphatically noticed by the evangelists than that John directed those whom he baptized to Christ, *as one who would baptize with the Holy Ghost* and with fire. It appears probable, therefore, the disciples at Ephesus meant by their answer that they had not been informed that the Holy Ghost, in His miraculous influence, had been actually conferred on any of the disciples of John or of the Messiah as yet.

As if they had said, We have not so much as heard whether there be any Holy Ghost miraculously communicated, much less have been made partakers of the same. If this be not the import of their strange answer, what must we infer? Were they baptized by John in their *infancy*, about thirty years before? Were they children of parents who were so ignorant or so careless as not to inform them of this very important part of John's ministry? Could they be baptized by this popular reformer, or have any connexion with those whom he discipled, and not be informed of that extraordinary fact—the descent of the Holy Ghost upon Jesus at His baptism? And was not the appellation *familiar* to John and his followers? Whether we consider these twelve men as natives of Ephesus or foreigners, as Jews or converted Gentiles, whether baptized with their parents in infancy or when adults, attending the one interpretation there remain insuperable difficulties; according to the other, none at all. (See Acts x. 37, 38.)

§ 12. The baptism of John, therefore, was a rite appertaining to the legal dispensation, instituted by God the Father for the use of the Jews alone, for a short time, to prepare them for the kingdom of the Messiah then approaching, as by an extraordinary general purification,* attended with suitable instructions and exhortations to the people, and performed by John himself. And Christian baptism, as far as it has been considered, is an evangelical rite, instituted by Christ, the Son of God, for the use of Jews and Gentiles, to the end of time, to be administered in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, or, more fully and properly, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, performed by Christ's disciples.

Thus John's ministry and baptism were, in a manner, the voice of the FATHER crying by him in the wilderness to prepare the thousands of Israel for a suitable reception of His Divine Son. "BEHOLD THE LAMB OF GOD!" Let your attention be drawn

* John's baptism is to be considered as one of those "divers washings," in use among the Jews on many occasions; for he did not attempt to make any alterations in the Jewish religion as settled by the Mosaic law, any more than to erect a new dispensation. And as these washings were intended not only for "the purifying of the flesh," but to be signs and symbols of moral purity; so the rite of baptism was, in this view, very suitable to the doctrine of repentance, which John preached.—*Jennings's Jewish Antiquities*, book i., chap. iii., Art. Proselytes. And the same author concludes, from a passage in Josephus, that the latter makes John's baptism to be of the nature of the Jewish purifications or ceremonial washings.

from all legal sacrifices, as about to cease; and let it be directed to HIM in whom all the law and the prophets have their accomplishment, and who is shortly, in a wonderful manner, to bear away the sin of the world! "And lo a voice from heaven, saying, THIS IS MY BELOVED SON, IN WHOM I AM WELL PLEASED: *hear ye Him.*" But the Christian baptism is the institution of the SON, proclaiming the necessity, and directing to the influences, of the Divine Spirit; and these influences poured upon the disciples of Jesus is the baptism of the SPIRIT. And thus we are led, with wonder and gratitude, to contemplate the *love* and provident care of the Father, the *mediation* and grace of the Son, and the efficacious and everlasting *operations* of the Holy Ghost. These three are one; and they concur in bearing record to the truth and glory of the blessed gospel. (See 1 John v. 6–8.) And those who are baptized in the name of Jesus, or the sacred Three-One, should incessantly breathe after the Spirit of grace, to which the ordinance refers us. Jesus, our Divine Master and Lord, is able and ready to baptize us with the Holy Ghost and with fire: not by conferring *miraculous* gifts, but, what is infinitely more important to us, *sanctifying* graces, whereby we may be purified and made meet for His heavenly kingdom.

§ 13. (Second,) It must be allowed, in the next place, that between the baptism of John and that of Christ there is an *agreement* in some particulars. And—

(1.) They were both from heaven, or of *Divine* institution: the one instituted by the Father, the other by the Son, but both alike by the highest authority.

(2.) There appears no mark of difference in the two institutions as to the *action* of baptizing; we may, therefore, conclude, for aught the different accounts say to the contrary, that it was the same. Pure water was the common element, but the nature and mode of the action itself will be considered in its proper place.

(3.) The same may be said concerning the qualifications of their respective *subjects;* which qualifications, and the grounds thereof, will be examined at large in the subsequent part of this treatise.

(4.) There was an agreement respecting some of the *blessings signified* and exhibited, particularly the *remission of sins,* (Mark i. 4; Luke iii. 3; Acts ii. 38.) They both referred to Christ as the *sovereign Dispenser* of the influences of the Spirit, the one

indeed in a sense more *remote*, and the other *directly*. (See Matt. iii. 11, &c.; and Acts ii. 38, &c.)

(5.) Some *obligations* were also similar, especially that of *repentance*. (See Matt. iii. 11; Acts xxii. 16.) Also that they should *believe on Christ*, (Acts xix. 3–5, viii. 37.) Both required a suitable *reformation* of life and conduct.

§ 14. I am led, by an attentive and impartial survey of those sacred passages that have any reference to the baptismal rite, to consider it in its most *general nature* as "the instituted ordinance of a *regular admission into the visible kingdom* of Christ, or, as it is sometimes called, the kingdom of heaven; wherein the *minister* solemnly *recognises the fitness* of the baptized to be a subject of that kingdom."

(1.) It is the instituted ordinance of a *regular* admission. (See Acts ii. 41.) Charity, and the nature of the case, compel me to conclude that there are many whom we should deem subjects of Christ's kingdom, even in its visible form, who were never admitted into it *ministerially* by baptism; among whom we may reckon at least the *promising* (not to say the *infant*) offspring of Antipædobaptists, many well-meaning, though erroneous disciples of Fox and Barclay, &c. Nor should this concession seem at all strange to those who disclaim the pretended *infallibility* of a visible Church. But however willing we may be to embrace these in the arms of Christian charity, as fellow-subjects of Christ's kingdom, yet, as they were never initiated into it by the solemn rite of baptism, we cannot consider them as *regular* subjects.

(2.) It is an ordinance of admission into the *visible* kingdom of Christ. (Compare Acts viii. 13, x. 47, 48.) The Redeemer's kingdom is to be considered in two respects: as to its *spiritual form*, and its *external administration*. Many, no doubt, belong to the *former* who have no *regular* connexion with the *latter;* and many, it is equally certain, are introduced to the Messiah's kingdom through the baptismal ceremony, (even in adult age,) who are not the subjects of His spiritual government. It is highly probable this was the case with great numbers of disciples who followed Christ but for a season, and then forsook Him; we might also instance in Judas, Simon the sorcerer, &c. And many will say at last, "We have eaten and drunk in thy presence," who yet will be disowned. However *regular* the admission, and however unimpeachable the *external* allegiance of some persons, they may be,

notwithstanding, essentially deficient in a *spiritual* view, and be at last translated into the kingdom of darkness.

(3.) It is a solemn *recognition* of the fitness of the baptized to be a subject of that kingdom. (See Matt. xxviii. 19.) The *qualifications* of the subjects must be of a moral nature, as before shewn, and baptism does not *produce* these, but *suppose* them. So far is it, therefore, from saving a soul, *ex opere operato*, that it does not even *constitute* a visible subject or member, but only *recognise* one; and so far from *making* the baptized a child of God, a member of Christ, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven, in the proper sense of these terms, that it is only *declarative* of his fitness to be a subject of the external administration of that kingdom, (Acts viii. 13.)

(4.) The person whose right it is to determine this fitness is the *minister* who does solemnly recognise it. (See Matt. xxviii. 19.) Whatever extravagant notions have obtained respecting the power of the keys, in admitting into the kingdom of heaven or shutting out of it, there is, however, a sound sense in which this power is assigned to ministers. They are the appointed guardians of the institution, and have a negative voice in opposition to all claims. If they abuse this power, as *fallible* persons may, to their own Master they stand or fall. Their Sovereign and Judge is at hand.

§ 15. (*First,*) Let us next inquire, by Scripture evidence, into the things represented by this significant rite. Passages of information relating to this particular are very numerous; but, if I mistake not, there is not one but is naturally reducible to these two heads—viz., *blessings exhibited* by it, and *obligations resulting* from it. I shall begin with the former.

(1.) One of the important blessings exhibited in the ordinance of Christian baptism, as in a bright mirror, is the *remission of sins*, (Acts ii. 38.) In this, as observed before, the baptism of Christ agreed with that of John, and, I may add, with the divers baptisms under the law, (Heb. ix. 10.) Indeed, it is not easy to conceive how there could be a dispensation of grace, or exhibition of mercy to fallen man, in any period of time, without including this blessing as an *essential* part of it.

(2.) It exhibits *salvation through Christ*, (Mark xvi. 16; 1 Pet. iii. 21.) The display of *salvation*, simply considered, is not *peculiar* to the Christian economy, more than the remission of sins; but the peculiarity of the one and the other blessing under the gospel

dispensation is, that they are proposed through the mediation and atonement of the Messiah *actually come.* Now, in this last most perfect and unshaken establishment of religion, the initiatory rite of it, baptism, exhibits salvation and life eternal to its highly-favoured subjects, as not only procured by the *merits,* but also conferred by the *hands* of its Divine Founder.

(3.) In Christian baptism is exhibited *union* and *communion* with Christ and with His body the Church, (1 Cor. xii. 13; Rom. vi. 3, 4, &c.; Col. ii. 11–13.) Under every economical publication of mercy to the apostate race of Adam, *communion with God* was a privilege singularly important. This Enoch, Noah, Abraham, and, indeed, all the faithful, enjoyed in every age, more or less; and the subjects of those dispensations, respectively, were favoured with the *exhibition* of it. But it is our distinguished lot, as subjects of the gospel kingdom, to have communion with Jehovah as our God and Father *in Christ,* with whose meritorious sufferings and perfect righteousness He is well pleased, displayed to us in the most explicit and endearing terms, and particularly in the significant institution of baptism. But *communion with Christ,* the Son of God, is of a nature still more discriminating. For this supposes not only an access to Him for spiritual blessings, and a reception out of His fulness of a liberal supply, but also a twofold *union*—the one *federal,* the other *mystical.* He exhibits Himself, therefore, as a complete *covenant* head to His visible Church, and therewith a correspondent communion; and in virtue of which *general* exhibition, a foundation of hope and encouragement is administered to all without exception. And whenever the ordinance of baptism is duly administered, this glorious truth is represented and signified. Christ is also a head of *influence;* this truth, equally glorious and important, He also exhibits in the same general way. Wherever the gospel and its ordinances come, a proclamation is made that Christ is the head of influence, that there is a most precious, endearing communion between Him and His people, that He regards them, in point of nearness and tender love, "members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones."* And as Christ is thus the head, all quickened by His vital influence are members in particular. Hence arises the communion of saints. "For as the body is one, and hath many members, and all the members of that one body, being many, are one body; so also is

* Eph. v. 30.

Christ" *and His Church.* "For by one Spirit are we all baptized into one body." (See also 1 John i. 3.)

(4.) It exhibits Christ as our spiritual *covering* and complete righteousness, (Gal. iii. 27.) Remarkable to this purpose are the words of Mr Locke:—"So that to God, now looking upon them, there appears nothing but Christ. They are, as it were, covered all over with Him, as a man is with the clothes he hath put on. And hence he says in the next verse, that they are all one in Christ Jesus, as if there were but that one person."* In every instance of baptizing into Christ, an exhibition is made of Him in this illustrious view: He is *set forth a propitiation;* He is displayed as a sun and shield, a robe of righteousness to cover our naked souls, and a garment of praise as a preservative from sorrow. That the *woman* should be *clothed with the Sun,* the Church enrobed with the Lord her righteousness, was esteemed a great wonder in *heaven,*† and should be marvellous in *our* sight.

§ 16. (5.) In baptism is eminently exhibited the *downpouring* of the Holy Spirit. To this John bore constant witness, (Matt. iii. 11; Mark i. 8; Luke iii. 16; John i. 33.) And this our Lord confirmed, (Acts i. 5.) This, moreover, Peter repeats, and further authenticates, for the information and encouragement of the Gentiles, (Acts ii. 38, 39.) Thus do the ancient promises and prophecies run respecting these Divine influences: Prov. i. 23, "Turn ye at my reproof; behold I will *pour out my Spirit* unto you." Isa. xliv. 3, "I will *pour my Spirit* upon thy seed." Joel ii. 28, "And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will *pour out my Spirit* upon all flesh," &c.; that is, I presume, "Under the gospel dispensation I will make an exhibition of this invaluable privilege to Jews and Gentiles without distinction." This prediction Peter applies to the *miraculous* effusion of the Spirit on the day of Pentecost, (Acts ii. 17, 18.) But that he does not exclude His *common* influences in after times from being a part of the promise, appears from ver. 29. To the same purpose is the language of Zechariah, chap. xii. 10, "And I will *pour* upon the house of David, and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem, the Spirit of grace and of supplications," &c. Such a general promise must intend an *economical exhibition* of the blessing; as is evident from the apostolic writings, (Heb. iv. 16, James i. 5, &c.;) and especially from our Lord's declarations and conduct, (Luke xi. 13; John vii.

* Paraph. *in loc.* † Rev. xii. 1.

37–39.) Under *former* dispensations God granted to His people His Holy Spirit, when He was comparatively but *as the dew* unto Israel, or the *small rain* on the tender herb; but now He is *poured* on the Gentiles, and *shed abundantly*, not only through the mediation, but also by the actual communications of Jesus Christ our Lord, (Tit. iii. 6; Acts ii. 33, x. 45; John i. 33.)

(6.) *Regeneration*, or the quickening influence of the Divine Spirit on a sinful soul, is another blessing exhibited in the baptismal rite, (John iii. 5; Tit. iii. 5.) From the evident reference baptism has to this effect of the Spirit on the souls of the redeemed, the ancient Fathers termed the ordinance itself, *παλιγγενεσία, regeneration.* And others have observed a striking analogy between the baptismal element and the regenerating efficacy of the Spirit:—"*Water* is the *principle* of very many *living things*, and in their creation the Spirit brooded on the *waters*, (Gen. i. 2.) The earth produces scarce anything that has life, either of the vegetable or reptile kind, unless it be impregnated with *water*, (Ps. lxv. 10.) The very generation of the human fœtus is said to be from *water*, (Isa. xlviii. 1; Ps. lxviii. 26.) Thus, in like manner, the blood and Spirit of Christ, as the mystical *water*, are the principles of our regeneration and new creation, (John iii. 5.) And as that is *signified* by the *water* of baptism, so baptism itself is called, Tit. iii. 5, 'The washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost.'"*

(7.) *Sanctification*, or the cleansing effect of the Spirit on a polluted soul, is a mercy very significantly represented and graciously exhibited in baptism, (1 Cor. vi. 11; Eph. v. 26.) 'The washing away the filth of the flesh,' as Peter (1 Ep. iii. 21) calls baptism, is not only an apt and expressive *sign* of the Spirit's purifying influence, but also a divinely-appointed *mirror*, if I may so express myself, in which God *exhibits* the blessing to all thus regularly enrolled among the subjects of His kingdom, in the most conspicuous manner. This remark is equally applicable to all the *other* particulars before mentioned as to this of sanctification. And it is a distinction I could wish the reader fully to enter into, being of no small moment in this debate, as will appear hereafter.

§ 17. (8.) What crowns all the other blessings, and in which indeed they are all virtually included, is man's chief and ALL-SUFFICIENT GOOD; and this is what baptism exhibits in a very

* Witsii Œcon. Fœder., lib. iv., cap. xvi., § 24.

express and glorious manner, (Matt. xxviii. 19.) The ever adorable and blessed God, Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, uses and dignifies this ordinance for the purpose of *displaying* His wonderful condescension and grace to every subject, introduced through this avenue into the visible Christian kingdom, thereby explicitly testifying, as of old to Abraham, that He is GOD ALL-SUFFICIENT. He declares Himself a merciful and loving *Father*, an almighty *Redeemer*, and most holy *Sanctifier*. But it is a consideration peculiarly worthy of our regard, that herein He does not merely declare what He is in himself, but what He is in relation to guilty, helpless sinners. To those who have escaped the corruption that is in the world through lust, or have been regularly entered as the subjects of the Redeemer's kingdom, are exhibited exceeding great and precious promises, that by these they might be partakers of a divine nature, (2 Pet. i. 4.) "Blessed is the people," *comparatively so at any rate*, "whose God is the Lord," who are authorised and encouraged to approach JEHOVAH as the object of their worship, trust, and confidence; and blessed in a manner still more emphatical, if their hearts, however corrupt by nature, are assimilated by grace to His moral image, (Ps. xxxiii. 12, cxliv. 15.) It is further observable, that the unworthiness, yea, the moral unfitness of the subject, does not eclipse this glorious truth; for as the heavenly Father maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust, so the *economical exhibition* of Himself, under the most illustrious and endearing characters, is to every subject of His gospel kingdom without exception. Whatever reception His mercy meets with among men, "He abideth faithful; He cannot deny himself." (See 2 Tim. ii. 11–14.) And He still *shineth*, even *in darkness*, though *the darkness comprehendeth Him not*, (John i. 4, &c.) This hath been the common and exalted privilege of the subjects of every dispensation of true religion that ever was in the world—viz., That JEHOVAH graciously *proposed* Himself to them as their CHIEF GOOD. But this *proposal*, or revealed exhibition, of the GREAT SUPREME made by Himself to those whom His providence singled out, though it seems the principal and most distinguishing feature of each economy, from the first to the second Adam, hath yet been characterised by different degrees of explicitness. What the wise man says of the path of the just, that it "shines more and more to the perfect day," is peculiarly applicable to the gradual openings of

the dispensations of grace. The fall of Adam brought upon his posterity a night of moral darkness, uncertainty, and justly-apprehended danger; while additional discoveries were made of the Divine will, and numerous witnesses raised to promulgate the certainty and approach of greater and better blessings; till, at length, the SUN OF RIGHTEOUSNESS appeared to illuminate the hemisphere of the gospel Church, as a prelude to a state of unclouded and immortal glory. By the gospel, life and immortality are brought to light, and placed in full view. What was hidden from ages and generations, is now made manifest to the saints, and they are encouraged, with open face, to behold the glory of the Lord. O glorious privilege! Blessed are the eyes that see, and the ears that hear these things! The meanest Christian hath no need to envy the dignity of kings, or the honour of prophets, that died without this sight. And let not the reader forget, that the very exhibition made in baptism of such blessings is an important privilege.

§ 18. (*Second,*) The *things signified* in baptism are either *blessings* or *obligations;* we have considered the former, and now proceed to the latter, which we shall find to be great and important. And—

(1.) From Christian baptism results the obligation of *repentance,* (Acts xxii. 16.) Every display of Divine goodness obliges a sinful creature to repent, (Rom. ii. 4;) but an exhibition of mercy and forgiveness increases the obligation. And as in baptism are held forth the greatest mercies and blessings, it must proportionably oblige to a disposition corresponding thereto. Now, though *remission of sins* be represented in Scripture as *generally* granted *upon* repentance, (Acts iii. 19,) it does not follow that there is no remission granted without it; but this is clear, that actual *impenitence,* persisted in, excludes remission. And those who are the subjects of forgiveness, but under a natural incapacity to repent, may be said, notwithstanding, to be under obligation in this sense, viz., that the *principle* of holiness and rectitude, from which evangelical repentance must proceed, is what every child of Adam is *obliged* to, or *ought* to possess. And the natural capacity itself is under an absolute obligation to subserve the dictates of that principle.

(2.) From baptism arises the obligation to *destroy the body of sin,* (Rom. vi. 3, 4, &c.) That the passage now quoted refers

to the OBLIGATION, resulting from baptism, to *renounce*, to *crucify*, to *destroy* and *bury* sin, is evident from the connexion. The apostle had been shewing that a sinner's *justification* was obtained freely by the righteousness of Christ imputed, and so the privilege not founded on any deeds of the law, or any good quality whatever in the person justified; no efforts or worthiness of the guilty sinner could ever deliver him from the condemnation of sin. This representation of the subject gave rise to an Antinomian objection, which the apostle first rejects with abhorrence, and then particularly refutes. And this he does by shewing that *holiness*, as well as righteousness, is an essential part of the Christian character; that sin must be *subdued* as well as *pardoned;* and that, as our righteousness was obtained by the perfect work of Christ, so our sanctification is effected by virtue of a vital *union* with Him. Now this mystical, vital, spiritual *union* is one of the great blessings exhibited in baptism; and from it result the most important obligations. Such a union requires particularly, that we should concur with the grand *designs* of Christ as the Saviour of His people. In regard to *sin*, it was His *design* to resist it in every instance, to renounce it in every shape, to nail it to His cross, and so to destroy and bury it, that neither Himself nor His redeemed people should be in any respect voluntary subjects of sin's power—*He* of its imputative force, *they* of its enslaving and defiling dominion. The person who is baptized into this union with Christ (and so is every one that is baptized at all) is, from the very notion of such a union, under an obligation of universal conformity to this important design. Christ is the vine, His disciples and subjects are the branches. As Divine justice dealt with sin in Christ the surety, so ought we to deal with it in ourselves. In Him it was condemned, crucified, utterly destroyed, and buried; our union with Christ, represented by baptism, obliges to a cordial concurrence in the same design. If justice spared sin in Christ, so may we in ourselves, otherwise not. If justice avenged itself on sin in our representative and head, so should we in ourselves. Christ, in His unparalleled condescension, and by virtue of His federal engagement, became so united to our imputed sin, that He and sin must live or die together. If He had not died, sin had not died. If He had not been buried, sin could not be buried. Then the union was dissolved, when both were dead and buried. But the same glorious power that

was pleased to bruise, to smite, to put Him to grief, and sacrifice Him to death, when united to sin, did, when He became disengaged from it, raise Him up to immortal life and glory. Nor can our new man be raised, till our old man be dead and buried. Therefore, instead of cherishing and animating in ourselves the monster sin, for the eternal destruction and burial of which Christ was crucified and buried, we are under the strongest *obligation* to concur with His design, to bring it to a state of death and keep it there, putting our foot, as it were, on its horrid neck whenever it attempts to rise. And as Christ, the tree of life, was taken from the trees of the wood, and after His death planted in the earth, that, freed from sin, He might grow and flourish with immortal vigour; so we ought to plant ourselves with Christ, that our corrupt nature may be left with His imputed sin and weakness, and our spiritual nature may grow up with Him into a similar fruitfulness, vigour, and glory. Or, as a graft cannot participate of the sap, life, and fruitfulness of another tree, except it be first severed from its old stock, leaving it for ever behind; so we cannot partake of spiritual life and fruitfulness from Christ, but by being severed and entirely disengaged from our sinful selves, that we may grow up into Him in all things. The apostle's similitude, when treating of the resurrection, is not inapplicable to the subject of this mystical union: "That which thou sowest is not quickened except it die." All seeds, and some species of plants, never spring up into new life, but by the death and corruption of at least a part thereof. When the *germen* sprouts forth, the other part consumes away in the ground. Thus, as baptism obliges to a concurrence with the *design of this union in general,* which is exhibited in baptism, so particularly with that of mortifying and *destroying the body of sin.*

§ 19. (3.) From baptism results the obligation of *newness of life and heavenly-mindedness,* (Rom. vi. 4, 8, 11, 13, 19, &c.) And this is peculiarly enforced by the apostle from the doctrine of vital union to Christ; union of design, union of interest; a certain oneness of spirit, of life, light, and liberty. For as Christ is risen and ascended to a state of triumph over sin and hell, a state of refined pleasure, and an inexpressible, serene delight, in spiritual purity and the beauty of holiness; so every person baptized *into Christ* is baptized into *His life,* and lies under the strongest obligations of being thus conformed to Him.

(4.) From our baptism arises the obligation of an inviolable *attachment to Christ* as our supreme Master and Lord, (1 Cor. i. 13.) Christ is our Master; He demands of us to regard Him as such, and He alone is deserving of it. No one else deserves to be called Master on earth. And as none can serve two masters of different and opposite interests, with the same fidelity and affection; by baptism, the rite of a regular entrance into His family and service, we are obliged to be faithfully attached to Him and His interest entirely. Christ is a King, and His Church is a kingdom, (but not of this world,) and every subject of this kingdom is in loyal duty bound to adhere to Christ as the lawful and infinitely worthy Sovereign.

(5.) An obligation is laid on the baptized person to seek and maintain *the answer of a good conscience* towards God, (1 Pet. iii. 21.) God's requisitions and demands from us are very great and awful. As a holy and just God, He claims perfection of state and obedience from the creature; nothing short of perfection will God accept, or the conscience approve of. How, then, can a sinner make a *confident appeal* to God, when answering His demands as a judge, or claiming the peculiar blessings of a God in covenant? What provision is made to calm the surges of the mind? What can dissipate the gloom of adverse providences, or support the soul, conscious of much frailty and imperfection, in the apprehensions of approaching death? A *consciousness* of being united to Christ as the risen Saviour. As united to Him we are *justified* by His *resurrection*, and *saved* by His constant intercession, His heavenly and immortal *life*. In baptism, indeed, are represented and exhibited God's all-sufficiency, His matchless greatness and goodness, the boundless and unfathomable riches of His grace; and a cordial, conscious embracing of these blessings must satisfy conscience and produce a serene content in the mind. But what the conscience has to do with, in the above passage, is, I presume, more immediately, the claim of Divine justice and holiness. The *resurrection of Christ* is, then, the great *evidence* we have that justice is satisfied with His finished work, and so it becomes an objective ground of confidence to the conscience (otherwise terrified with guilt and condemnation) in its reply to the Divine claims. And being conscious of a *vital union* with Christ, the consideration of His victorious resurrection and triumphant ascension lays the foundation of holy joy and triumph. But it is a remark not a

little important, that here the remedy is *proportioned* to the disease; the answer of a *good conscience* is to the *believer* adequate to the clamours of an *evil conscience* to the *unbeliever*.

§ 20. (6.) From baptism results the obligation of filling up (honourably, no doubt,) the place of departed Christians, (1 Cor. xv. 29.) What Solomon remarks of the generations of the world of mankind, through the successive revolutions of time, is applicable to the Church of God in the world: "One generation passeth away, and another generation cometh." * All alike make their exit through the gate of death; for it is appointed for *all men* once to die, by an irreversible decree. How, then, is the depopulated kingdom of Christ to be recruited? When persecution with its merciless attendants, and the wasting messengers of death, render the Church like a desolate island, how is it to be colonised? By constant supplies from the wide world. The world is a common nursery from whence the Church is planted; but the watering of baptism is not of itself sufficient to insure the future growth, verdure, and fruitfulness of the plants; for in this plantation, the Church visible, every plant which the heavenly Father planteth not (of which there have always been awful instances) shall be rooted up. "Paul may plant, and Apollos may water, but God giveth the increase." But notwithstanding this, ministers are commissioned to transplant and to water, leaving the event to God. But to speak without a figure, it is evident, that when any are brought into the Church regularly by baptism, to fill up the room of others, they are obligated to do it honourably and usefully; even as a member that is chosen into any body corporate, or a soldier to fill a place in a rank or regiment.

(7.) From the ordinance of baptism arises the obligation of *waiting for the promise of the Spirit*, (Acts ii. 38, 39, viii. 12–17.) The gospel dispensation is eminently distinguished from all preceding it, by a rich display and communication of the influences of the Spirit, not only in a miraculous way, but also as a *Sanctifier*, and especially as a *Comforter*, to the Church. And as this is a blessing of unspeakable value, and most explicitly exhibited in Christian baptism, every person to whom it hath been administered is under the strongest obligation to seek and wait for all necessary Divine influences. This is the unction from the Holy One which

* Eccles. i. 4.

we all want; and through the Divine mercy, there is in the institution of baptism a foundation laid for the most importunate and unwearied application for all needful supplies thereof. We can never be too ardent and importunate in our desires and prayers for the illuminating, quickening, teaching, and transforming influences of the Spirit. And this incessant breathing of the soul after the Divine influences, is not only its interest and comfort when so employed; but, in consequence of baptism, where the blessing, by virtue of the Divine appointment, is clearly set forth, it is what every subject is absolutely *obliged* to do. And as no one can be so far replenished as not to need further supplies, the obligation must be constant, through every step of our life.

§ 21. (8.) Another obligation highly important, resulting from Christian baptism, is an absolute devotedness to the *grace* and sovereign *will* of GOD, FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST, (Matt. xxviii. 19.) Baptism *into the name* (εἰς ὄνομα) of Father, Son, and Spirit, implies an obligation—

[1.] To receive this God, and Him *alone*, for our God, as the object of our worship, the sovereign of our heart, and our everlasting portion—to the absolute disavowal and renunciation of all competitors whatsoever.

[2.] To receive Him under the representation here given of Himself, as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. That these three terms belong to God only, and not the first to the true God, and the other two to beings of an *inferior* class, (and if at all *inferior*, they must be *infinitely* so,) seems evident from the *manner* in which they are connected; for from *this* nothing less can be observed than *equality* among them; and the importance of this remark rises still higher when we reflect that the goodness of God, His detestation of idolatry, the excellency of the gospel above other religions, and the exalted character of Jesus as the Founder of it, are necessarily *degraded* if this be not the fact. For thus to associate the terms, Father, Son, and Spirit, in a solemn ordinance of religion, the very *introductory* ordinance, on supposition that an infinite disparity subsists between the objects they refer to, appears like putting a dangerous stumblingblock at the very porch of the Christian temple. But His true disciples have not so learned Christ; and Wisdom is justified of her children.

[3.] Every baptized person is laid under obligations of duty to

Father, Son, and Spirit, *respectively*, according to the Scripture representations of these Divine Persons, and their several *relations* to Him, whether absolute or exhibited only.

[4.] Another obligation included in the form of administration is, cordially to embrace the infinite mercy, grace, and love of God, herein exhibited. Every expression of benevolence and favour from God obliges the person to whom it is directed to answerable gratitude; but no one that hath been admitted by baptism into the number of Christ's regular subjects can say that he hath not had represented in his baptism unspeakably great and glorious blessings; and this he may be as certain of as he can be of the *fact*—THAT HE WAS BAPTIZED. Whether he be certified of his baptism by the evidence of *sense*, or competent human *testimony*, does not alter the case; to be sure of the *fact* is to be equally sure of the exhibited blessing and the correspondent obligation.

[5.] To be influenced, actuated, transformed, directed, and governed by that mediatorial grace and mercy which is displayed by the medium of this ordinance. Though the Divine mercy be like a most delightful sunshine in itself, yet mankind are so situated in the present state as not to be benefited by it but by reflection. (See 2 Cor. iii. 18.) The face or person of Christ, the inspired records, the ordinances and institutions of the gospel, and this initiatory rite in particular, do eminently answer this important end. And in proportion as this last does so, the baptized person is obliged by it.

[6.] To be absolutely devoted to the sovereign *will* of God, so as to be at His command and disposal in every respect. As our Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier, He hath an undoubted right to us,—all we are, all we have, and all we do; which right, being evidently represented, and, as it were, reflected, by the ordinance to every subject of it, obliges to a suitable and adequate devotedness to His will.

§ 22. Having now considered the blessings exhibited by baptism, and the obligations resulting from it, by an attentive regard to what the New Testament says on the subject, I proceed to make some remarks, that seem to follow from the whole, as obvious *conclusions*. And—

(*First*,) Whatever blessings are, according to the Scripture account, represented and exhibited by baptism, there are *answerable obligations* resulting from them, though not particularly

specified. And this appears from the very nature and spring of moral obligation; for one person is *obliged* to another in proportion as he is *indebted* to him: so that to be under obligation to another, with respect to *universal justice*, is the same as to be his debtor; and the nature and degree of this *debt* must be ascertained by the comparative *worthiness* of the person to whom we are indebted, in all those respects in which we suppose him to have a demand or claim upon us. For instance, if *obedience* be the debt, then it should be according to the worthiness of the comparative *authority* requiring it; if the debt be *gratitude*, it should be according to the worthiness of the benefits or expressed benevolence of the party benefiting, compared with the worthiness or unworthiness of the party benefited; and if the debt be *love* or benevolence, it should be according to the worthiness or excellence of the person himself, which worthiness consists in the joint consideration of greatness and goodness. Let us apply these reflections to the present case. *God* is infinitely great, and infinitely good; hence every intelligent being is under infinite obligation to *love* Him, because He is infinitely excellent and worthy, yea, is *worthiness itself* in every possible respect. God's *benefits* to man are emanations from His matchless benevolence; and the greatness of those benefits exhibited in the gospel dispensation, or, which is the same thing, in its initiatory rite, are of unparalleled excellence and importance. "Behold," says an inspired apostle, "what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us!" And says another, "To us are given exceeding great and precious promises." The riches of Christ are unsearchable riches; then what must be the gift of Christ himself, and what must be the mission of the Divine Comforter! What a worthiness of favour is here, and what a call to *gratitude!* Again, God's *authority* is supreme, and its worthiness is infinite; and as every exhibition of mercy and favour designed for sinners, and *addressed* to them as *such*, claims from them a suitable and corresponding tribute of gratitude, and the obligation or debt rises and multiplies as the favour does, it follows that the most free and sovereign grace of the gospel must in this respect have all the force, influence, and authority of a law upon all to whom it is directed. All the exhibitions of gospel blessings, therefore, have an authoritative and binding power, (for this is necessarily implied in the very idea of obligation,) even when they are not delivered in a commanding form; but when a

disregard to gospel blessings is *declared*, in the most express terms, to be displeasing to God, and destructive to ourselves,—when we are positively told that a non-compliance with the proposals of mercy is the same insult as *to charge the God of truth with impious falsehood*, (1 John v. 10,) the authority with which gospel grace appears invested is infinitely important. From these considerations it appears, that wherever we meet with a benefit or blessing exhibited in baptism, we may as safely conclude that an *answerable obligation* results therefrom, as if that obligation were mentioned in form. Another conclusion, which is in a manner the converse of that now mentioned, is the following, viz. :—That whatever obligations we find specified in the New Testament as actually connected with baptism, or derived from it, we may be sure that the foundation of that obligation is laid in the exhibition of *answerable benefits*, though not expressly mentioned in that view.

§ 23. (*Second*,) If the above representation of the nature and design of this ordinance be just, it may contribute to vindicate the *right use* of two very important terms, commonly employed in the controversy, liable to abuse, and, may I not add, very seldom explained in a consistent manner? I mean the terms SEAL and COVENANT. Hardly anything more common in explaining the nature of baptism than some such phrase as this—"It is a sign and *seal* of the gospel covenant:" and the authority usually urged in favour of this application of the word *seal*, is what the apostle says touching circumcision, Rom. iv. 11, "And he received the sign of circumcision, a SEAL of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised." Waving a particular discussion of the many strange things this notable passage has been made to speak, and the absurd deductions following thereupon, I would observe, that the chief, if not the only source of these mistakes, has been owing to the want of a proper attention to the *different uses* of SEALS among the ancients, in connexion with the *different acceptations* of the term COVENANT.

The word *covenant*, as I shall shew more fully afterward, frequently intends, in the Holy Scriptures, a gracious *decree*, the exhibition of a free *promise*, or the like, directed for the use of any; and in the above text, the *exhibited blessing* is the *righteousness of faith*. This is the Divine proclamation, full of mercy and grace, that righteousness and eternal life should be received

by *faith*, as that is opposed to work and *merit;* which by no means implies, that the blessing is never communicated to any of the human race but in consequence of a certain act of the mind called believing. Prevailing *unbelief*, it is true, excludes all actual interest in the contents of the gracious charter, as it indicates a want of union with the Divine Saviour, which is the grand foundation of our being accepted as righteous; and *true belief*, for a similar reason, entitles to that righteousness which faith regards. But faith, or believing, as an *act* of the mind, is not the fundamental and essential bond of union; for in *that* respect the Spirit of Christ, whereby the fallen sinner is apprehended, is the bond; and which may subsist without the existence of any such act, as all must allow who admit that it appears agreeable to the Divine constitution to impute righteousness to infants, who have neither works nor faith. This is sufficient to shew that the *righteousness* exhibited and reckoned to Abraham, which was the infinite merit of the Divine Interposer, may have its complete effect on *some* of the human race, without any actual restipulation on their part: though, at the same time, it lays them under *obligations* of a suitable return, whether designed for life or death. And if so, here is a *covenant* (if we intend thereby *an application* of mercy and righteousness) without any sealing, or so much as *consenting*, on the part of the person benefited.

Among the ancients, as well as the moderns, the use of SEALS was various, and by no means confined to *contracts* or agreements between two or more parties. An act, patent, or charter, &c., of a monarch is sealed, as well as a mutual contract. Seals were affixed to *letters* and *decrees*, (1 Kings xxi. 8; Esth. iii. 12, 15, viii. 8, 10, &c.) In short, merchants were wont to put a seal or mark (usually on a thin piece of lead, not wax) on their commodities; different things were sealed for security against intrusion and deceit, as bags, chests, doors, &c. Thus, for instance, God says, Deut. xxxii. 34, "Is not this laid up in store with me, and *sealed* up among my *treasures?*" And thus Job says, chap. xiv. 17, "My transgression is *sealed* up in a *bag*." When Daniel was cast into the lions' den, a stone was brought, and laid upon the mouth of the *den*, and the king *sealed* it with his own signet, (Dan. vi. 17;) and the stone on our Lord's *sepulchre* was *sealed*, (Matt. xxvii. 66.) When, therefore, the apostle styles circumcision a "seal of the righteousness of faith," it seems an unwarrantable

liberty to infer that the seal here referred to must necessarily be that of a restipulator in acceding to the terms of a contract, as if the *faith* of Abraham, or of his descendants, or of any other whose faith *should be* in uncircumcision, gave existence to circumcision *as a seal.* Why not rather consider it as what the Eternal King has thought fit to affix to an *act of grace?* What the instrument to be sealed contained, was an *exhibition of righteousness;* and, for confirmation that this righteousness was recommended as the only foundation of a sinner's hope, and as an all-sufficient introduction to eternal bliss, God appointed circumcision to ratify or *seal* it. This instrument or *covenant* contained glad tidings of great joy, which should be first to the house of Israel principally, and afterwards to all nations; it was the gospel in miniature. And the *seal* was to continue until the Seed should come, when express order should be given for its abolition, to make way for another. But as long as this ordinance continued in force, it *exhibited,* not only to the subject himself, but to all who should observe it, whether male or female,—nor only while the ceremony was performed, but in every period of life,—the *certainty* of these glad tidings. If any doubt arose concerning either the *covenant blessings* or *obligations* represented, they were to have recourse to circumcision as the broad seal of heaven, whereby they might be certified that the *former* continued in full force and virtue, by way of exhibition, for their use, whether male or female; and that the *latter* were unavoidably incumbent on them.

§ 24. Let us now advert to what Mr B. has to say on this subject:—"If Dr Lightfoot's version of Rom. iv. 11, and his observation upon it, be just, there can be little reason for calling *baptism* a *seal* of the *covenant,* on account of *circumcision* being denominated a *seal* of *righteousness.* His translation of the text, and part of his remark upon it, are as follow:—'"And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which *should hereafter be* in uncircumcision." Which *should be,* not which *had been.* Not what had been to *Abraham* as yet uncircumcised, but which should be to *his seed* uncircumcised,—that is, to *Gentiles* that should hereafter imitate the faith of *Abraham;*'—which version and interpretation," adds Mr B., "are agreeable, so far as I can perceive, both to the scope of the passage and the letter of the text. For the apostle does not represent circumcision as a

seal of righteousness to the Jews *in common*, but to Abraham *in particular*. Or if our brethren must needs call it [baptism] a seal of the covenant, we desire to be informed what *spiritual blessing* it ascertains, really ascertains, to infants, any more than to unbelieving adults who have at any time been baptized; or, than circumcision, to similar characters, under the former economy? Millions of Jews were circumcised in their infancy, and numbers of proselytes, who lived and died in rebellion against the government and grace of God. Simon the sorcerer, professing faith in Jesus Christ, though he had it not, was baptized by Philip; and many, no doubt, in former and latter ages, have been baptized on a similar profession, whose conduct disgraced the Christian character. Now, must we consider these, *all* these, as having had the *righteousness of faith*, or the *covenant of grace*, RATIFIED OR SEALED to them? Far be it! Why, then, should baptism be represented at every turn, and without hesitation, as a *seal* of the covenant, when applied to infants?"* To this I will subjoin the following remarks from Dr Stennett: — "The practice of affixing *seals* to covenants is of very early date. The use and intent of it is, to bind the parties contracting to the fulfilment of the conditions agreed on between them; and to preserve to that end an authentic proof of the transaction. Now IF this be the practice alluded to, there is an impropriety in the phrase itself, of persons *having a right to the seal of the covenant;* for if sealing be a matter rather of *duty* than of *right*, to use this kind of language is much the same as to say, that persons have a right to do their duty. But what I have principally to observe is, that it follows from *this* account of the usage of sealing, that interest in a covenant does not in all instances give persons a right to the seal of it, or, in other words, make it their duty to affix their seal to it. A man may be included in a covenant or benefited by it, who is no way a party to it, and whose signature therefore is not at all requisite. Children, for instance, frequently derive advantages from covenants which, with all the authentic forms of them, existed long before they were born."† And on Rom. iv. 11, he further remarks :—"Abraham believed in the promise of God respecting the Messiah, and by voluntarily *submitting* to circumcision in obedience to the Divine

* Pædobaptism Examined, vol. ii., pp. 264-269.

† Answer to Dr A., p. 105.

command, he gave clear evidence of his faith; and so circumcision became, in regard of *him*, a seal or authentic proof of his justification: it was a seal affixed by Abraham himself to the covenant, and an attestation, on the part of God, to his interest in the blessings of it. And in the same light it might be considered in regard of *others*, who submitted to it in *riper* years, and upon the conviction of their judgment. It was an expression of their assent and consent to the covenant, and so a seal affixed by them to it. And it was on the part of God (to speak with reverence) a seal affixed by Him to the covenant,—that is, a gracious assurance, with respect to those who thus in faith submitted to it, that He would pardon, accept, and save them.* It is easy to see that baptism cannot be a seal of the righteousness of faith—that is, of their justification—to infants, they not having *faith;* nor can it be in regard of them a test of new obedience, they not *voluntarily submitting* to it." And, again:—"Circumcision was *a token of the covenant between God and Abraham.* A positive arbitrary sign, instituted by God to bring to remembrance that transaction, in the same manner as the bow in the heavens was appointed by God as a token of the *transaction between Him and Noah.*"† Thus I have endeavoured to give these gentlemen's objections and reasons all the strength they admit of, nor have I designedly evaded the force of any one circumstance; but forbear further quotations, to avoid prolixity: concluding, that if these positions are fairly and solidly refuted, as far as they tend to oppose Pædobaptist principles, this is sufficient for my present purpose. I only observe here previously, that if the reader will give himself the trouble to consult and weigh impartially what I have said in the last section, most, if not all, that is here advanced is in effect answered or precluded. However, I shall not decline a more particular examination of what they urge.

§ 25. Whatever appearance of argument there is in these quotations, against the propriety of calling circumcision and baptism *in general*,—that is, considered merely *as institutions*, independent of the genuine *faith* of the subject,—*seals* of the covenant, is reducible to these positions:—"Abraham's covenant was a *contract* between God and Abraham, and as such required a *mutual* agreement of both parties. Mr B. will have it, that circumcision was not a *seal* of righteousness to the Jews *in common;* but to

* Page 107. † Page 109.

Abraham *in particular*. Dr S. maintains that it was so to *all believing* Jews; but both agree that it was not a *seal* of righteousness to Jewish infants: and the common reason is, that they were not capable of *assenting* or submitting to the contract. And on these accounts baptism is not a seal of righteousness to any infants, or even adults who are not true believers." Here are several things taken for granted which ought to have been first proved. And, first, I maintain, it is not true that what is called the Abrahamic covenant was a *contract* between God and Abraham; as if it could not be properly termed God's covenant *to* or *with* Abraham, without the latter's *believing consent*. For—

(1.) Nothing is more clear, than that the first publication of mercy to our fallen parents (Gen. iii. 15) was of the nature of a *free promise*. We may, perhaps, not improperly call it, The first edition of the covenant of grace that was ever published and revealed to man. Nor was it in their power to alter its nature as a covenant. Their not believing could not have made the faith of God of no effect. The revealed and exhibited blessing was God's covenant *to* man, or, if you please, *with* man,—which amounts to the same thing in regard of God's transactions with sinners,—independent of his assent and consent to the terms of it. For God to publish His covenant to sinners, few or many, is one thing; and for these to give it a cordial reception is another. Such a transaction, on the part of God, may stand on the most absolute foundation; and if we believe not, He abideth faithful and true to His declaration: but a *believing* concurrence, or a *disposition* suited to such an exhibited favour, is what proceeds from a very different dispensation—that of the Spirit of grace in executing the hidden counsel of Heaven. The covenant of grace is ONE. In its original *internal* form, which comes under the notion of a contract or mutual agreement in the strictest sense, it is perfectly *absolute*, as founded on the sovereign pleasure and irreversible decrees of God. It is also *absolute* in its *exhibition* to some rather than to others; for in this sense as well as the former it may be said, God will have mercy on whom He will have mercy, and compassion on whom He will have compassion. Whatever is *conditional* of it is on account of man's *free nature* and God's *moral government*. Its publication and exhibition to man, *as a free agent*, solicits and requires his approbation, his obedient reception of what is proposed to him by his Creator and Benefactor. But mankind being

universally sinners, and *as such* infinitely unworthy,—and, what is more, totally averse from what is required of them,—no soul could be saved if the covenant in its *absolute internal* form did not *insure* the direction of its blessings to the intended persons; as also a disposition suited to their enjoyment. Thus when God gave Adam and Eve an abstract of His covenant of redemption, which was absolute and infallible in its internal form as settled in the Divine counsel; the *exhibition* of it was also *absolute*, both to *them* and *all those* of their posterity who should be informed of it: importing that there was mercy with God that He might be feared. Yes, not less absolute than His covenant of the night and of the day; which no one surely will maintain was sealed, certified, or made more absolute by the *assent* and *submission* of man, to whom it was given. It was, in that very display and promulgation of it, an unspeakable blessing; and, as such, absolutely *obliged* them to suitable acknowledgments, previous to, and independent on, any dispositions of the persons, whether good or bad. And not only so, but it is highly probable the institution of *sacrifices* was given to Adam as a *seal* of the covenant, as well as a type of Christ. "For," as Witsius observes, "the *institutions* which commemorated sin, also signified and *sealed* the future expiation of it by the Messiah."* Again he says—"These *sacrifices* were *seals* of God's covenant. For though there is a difference between sacrifices and sacraments formally considered,—because sacraments are given by God to men, but sacrifices are offered by men to God,—nevertheless, there is no reason why the consideration of a sacrament and sacrifice may not, in different respects, concur in one and the same thing; for even sacrifices are given by God to men,—that is, are *instituted* by Divine authority,—that by these ceremonies the coming of the Son of God in the flesh, &c., might be signified and SEALED."†

(2.) Not less absolute was God's covenant or *free promise* to Noah, (which Dr S. quaintly calls a "transaction between Him and Noah,") that He would drown the world no more by a flood. This was a seasonable *covenant* granted to Noah, to all mankind, and literally to *every creature* capable of the benefit; and particularly so, as it was an adumbration of the covenant of grace, or connected with it. But what is very remarkable is, that God's

* Witsii Œcon. Fœder., lib. iii., cap. iii., § 10.
† Ibid., lib. iv., cap. vii., § 7.

covenant to Noah, and his seed for ever, was confirmed and sealed by a token on the part of God *only*, independent of any consent and *submission* on the part of Noah and his descendants. God made a covenant, and set His *bow in the cloud* as the confirming seal of it; but where was Noah's assent and submission on behalf of himself, his posterity, &c., to render the contract valid? For if it was a COVENANT made with all flesh, should it not, on the principle I am opposing, have the *consent* of the parties contained in it, as the *impression active*, before it could be said to be ratified or sealed to them? Rather, I would ask, is not the rainbow a sign and confirming seal of God's covenant not less to the atheistical philosopher than the grave divine? Nor should we suppose that fallen sinners are so far complimented, and that God's *institutions* are so liable to be degraded and nullified, as that nothing could be a *seal* of His covenant to men but what they are pleased to make valid by their *faith* and *submission*.

§ 26. (3.) What has been said of the dispensations of God's covenant to Adam and Noah, with their respective seals, is applicable to that publication of it made to Abraham; but with some remarkable circumstances of *limitation* in regard of the *additional blessings* exhibited, and the *superadded seal* of its circumcision. The *former* were principally addressed to Abraham's descendants in the line of Isaac and Jacob, though not exclusively, for a gracious provision was made in favour of proselytes and their seed; and the *latter* was confined to Abraham's *male* descendants, and those of the proselytes. This restriction of the seal of the covenant, to be applied only to the males, was, we may be sure, founded on the wisest and justest reasons; and may be in some good measure accounted for, by attending to the civil and ecclesiastical polity of the Jews, in connexion with the Saviour's incarnation. To investigate the particular reasons of this restriction, my present argument does not require. I would only add, that as the institution of sacrifices was a *seal* of the former dispensations of the covenant, and a part of family religion, we ought not to infer that Abraham's *female* descendants had *no seal* of God's covenant in common with the males. All that can be said of them is, that they were deprived, by an express restriction, of this *additional seal*, for reasons the most proper; while they enjoyed everything else in common. So far, then, should we be from supposing that a Jewish circumcised *male* had not in his flesh the seal of God's

covenant, even from infancy, that I think it may be justly affirmed, the *female* part was highly obliged to the Divine goodness for what may be properly termed a *seal of the righteousness of faith*, to *assure* them of blessings exhibited *to them*, and of their important obligations. If, therefore, God's COVENANT of redemption to fallen man, in its external form and manifestation, is nothing else but a DECLARATION *of sovereign grace and a Divine righteousness*, which, in everlasting transcendant love and compassion, is provided for the use and service of wretched sinners, who live within the pale of such a declaration; and if to this God institute a sign, yet not a *mere* sign, but a confirming token, a demonstrating *evidence* of the truth of what is testified, and of God's infallible, unchanging veracity,—be that sign what it may, —and directed to be applied or administered to the subjects of a dispensation indiscriminately; or else *expressly restricted*, for wise and obvious reasons, to a certain class, as in circumcision to the males only;—is there not the greatest propriety in calling such a token THE SEAL of God's *covenant*, perfectly unconnected with, and *independent* of the *faith* of the subject, as in the case of Jewish infants?

§ 27. But this is not all. The principle I am opposing is fraught with an inconvenience little short of a gross absurdity. For this implies, "that circumcision became a seal or authentic *proof* of their justification only to those of *riper* years, who, upon conviction of their judgment, *submitted* to that ordinance; and the same rule," our opponents contend, "holds as to the ordinance of baptism." *This*, it is evident, the above quotations maintain, and the following proposition is the sum:—"Then *only* may circumcision and baptism be termed *seals*, when they are PROOFS of justification to persons submitting to them." Now I ask—

(1.) May we infer that a man is certainly in a justified state, and what is more, *assured* of his justification, *because he has submitted* to an instituted ordinance, such as circumcision or baptism? If not, how can his affixing his seal to the covenant, which, according to Dr S., must be matter of duty, be any *proof* to him of his justification? Previous to this *duty* of sealing the covenant, the performer must either be *assured* of his being in a justified state, or he is *not:* if the *former*, how can the observance of such an external rite be a *proof* to him of his justification? What is designed, it seems, for this external right to perform, has been *before*

effected by other means. As a *proof,* then, it comes too late, if the person was assured of righteousness antecedently. But if he was *not* assured previous to his performance of the duty, and yet was conscious of no insincerity of heart, is the mere addition of the performance of the duty a seal or certain proof to him that he is justified? It should seem, then, that no person who submits to baptism upon conviction, and who is conscious of no hypocrisy, can be at a loss to determine upon the goodness of his state; for baptism is to him a *seal* whereby he may be certified of his justification. But if this be true, how comes it to pass that any sincere souls, who have made that submission, are yet harassed with fears and doubts respecting their state? or, must we pronounce them all hypocrites and unsound, who hesitate about their interest in Christ, and maintain that, in this respect, he who doubteth is damned?

(2.) If it be said that baptism is a seal to those only who have *real faith,* and that such persons *only* may be *assured* of justification and the consequent blessings of the covenant; I reply, that then it follows, that baptism can be no seal to any but such as have the assurance of faith: for if they doubt of the *reality* of their faith, they must proportionally doubt that baptism is a seal; and the consequence will be, that since, on the principle I am opposing, baptism is a seal of the covenant as a *duty* performed by the believer, and on the part of God an attestation of his interest in the blessings of the covenant, God's attestation is no attestation to any who doubt of the reality of their faith, and so is a seal of a certainty that certifieth nothing!

(3.) There seems but one method of evading this conclusion; and that is, that however doubtful a person may be of his state before or at his baptism, yet, *after* he has submitted to the duty upon conviction, he may be *assured* of his interest in the blessings of the covenant. Yet this evasion is of no use, except we borrow for its aid another principle, which maintains that the ordinance produces a real moral change in the subject, *ex opere operato.* For if it be said, that the certainty is obtained from God *after* we have in faith complied with a known duty, and from the consideration of our submitting to it *as such;* I would fain know how *this* rather than any *other* duty, enjoined by the same authority, becomes an *evidence* of our interest in covenant blessings? or, how we are *certified* of a Divine attestation to our justification in any other way than we may infer from any other Christian duty what-

ever? Is it not absolutely inconceivable how baptism can be a *confirming seal* of our interest in Christ and His benefits, on the part of God, in any other sense than all other duties may be so termed when performed by faith? And if so, it follows from our opponents' own principles, and contrary to what Dr S. maintains, that neither baptism nor circumcision can be any *distinguishing seals* at all, any more than any other moral duty performed in faith.

(4.) From the above considerations it must also follow, if Mr B. and Dr S. are right, that circumcision could not be a seal of the righteousness of faith, even to Abraham himself, contrary to the apostle's express words, (Rom. iv. 11,) as an institution, without a superadded revealed assurance given him of the *reality* of his faith and submission. And thus we are driven, at length, to this conclusion, that circumcision was no seal to Abraham or any of his descendants but in *consequence* of the sealing of the Spirit; and the purport of God's language to Abraham must be, (Gen. xvii. 9–14,) "Though I enjoin upon thee, and thy seed after thee, the rite of circumcision as a token of the covenant betwixt me and you; yet it shall be no token of confirmation, no seal of the covenant at all, but to such of you as have previously the infallible witness and sealing of my Spirit, to certify you of the undoubted reality of your faith and submission. And observe further, that this honour is not to be extended to thy seed who shall be circumcised in infancy; for, not having faith, it can be no seal to them: no, this honour is reserved for those who shall be bought with money of any stranger, or any proselytes not of thy seed; and these must be sealed by the Spirit, or have the certainty of their interest in the covenant, *before* they have any just grounds to conclude that circumcision is to them the seal of my covenant." But is this a declaration worthy of God?

(5.) It therefore follows, on Dr S.'s hypothesis, that to be of the seed of Abraham was a privilege not worthy to be compared with that of a proselyte. To Jacob and the patriarchs, for instance, circumcision was not a seal of the covenant, for they had *no faith* when circumcised; but the proselyte of a day, who submitted to the rite upon conviction, had in his flesh a confirming seal of his justification. Had not a native Jew here an irresistible temptation to envy the proselyte? a Jewish master to envy the privilege of his servant bought with his money, even supposing their piety to be equal? How happy those children above others, who,

through the neglect of their parents, or any other accident, were left uncircumcised in their minority, whereby they had an opportunity in *riper* years to *submit* to the important rite, and thereby of obtaining a *seal* of their justification!

§ 28. Aware of these inconveniences, Mr B. avails himself of Dr Lightfoot's version of Rom. iv. 11, and his remark upon it. "'A seal of the righteousness of the faith which *should hereafter be* in uncircumcision.' Which *should be*, not which *had been*." Why the Doctor should supply the elliptical passage, τῆς ἐν τῇ ἀκροβυστίᾳ, "which in uncircumcision," with a *should hereafter be*, requires no small discernment to determine.

I think it must be allowed by any impartial competent judge, that the supplied part of the sentence is *far fetched*, and should not be preferred without manifest necessity. The Vulgate Latin renders it, *quæ* EST *in præputio;* the Syriac version is rendered, *quæ* FUERAT; the Arabic, *quæ* ERAT; and the Ethiopic thus: *Et circumcisio signaculum justitiæ ejus fuit quam ei dedit, et signum ejus, ut ei innotesceret de hoc, quod per fidem Deus justificaret Abraham quum non fuit illo tempore circumcisus.* The *scope* of the passage is evidently this: The apostle, in prosecution of his grand proof,—that justification and eternal life are not obtained by human worthiness, works, or observances of our own, but are solely and absolutely the fruit of sovereign grace,—shews that this doctrine, though more clearly revealed in the gospel, was yet the common language of preceding dispensations. That this was the import of the Jewish dispensation, David testifieth: ver. 6, "Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man unto whom God imputed righteousness without works." And that this method of acceptance through grace and a Divine righteousness was not *peculiar* to the circumcision, but belongs to the uncircumcision also, appears from the history of Abraham, whom the Jews were so ready to boast of on every occasion: ver. 9, "Cometh this blessedness then upon the circumcision *only*, or upon the uncircumcision *also?* for we say that faith," as contradistinguished from works or any manner of worthiness of his own, "was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness." Ver. 10, "How was it then reckoned? when he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision." Ver. 11, "And," (καὶ,) as a following consideration, many years after the righteousness of faith was made known to him, "he

received the sign of circumcision, a SEAL of the righteousness of the faith which" (the *relative* having a respect either to the antecedent *faith* or *righteousness* *) "he had [or possessed] in uncircumcision;" that uncircumcised state just spoken of. That the phrase, ἐν τῇ ἀκροβυστίᾳ, refers to Abraham's uncircumcised *state* rather than to the Gentiles, in this place, may appear from what immediately follows. To the intent "that he might be the father of ALL believers," (a conspicuous example to Jews and Gentiles that justification is not the consequence of ceremonial observances, or any human merit, worthiness, or consideration whatever,) δι' ἀκροβυστίας, "through uncircumcision," (by reason of his being the favourite of God in his uncircumcised state, as well as after;) to the end "that righteousness might be imputed unto them *also*." Ver. 12, "And that he might be the father of circumcision," that is, of spiritual circumcision, (an incontestable instance that the *blessings exhibited* in and by that rite, and of which circumcision was the *seal*, were not intended for Christian Gentiles exclusively, but had respect) "to them who are not of the circumcision ONLY, but also walk in the steps of that faith of our father Abraham, which he had (ἐν τῇ ἀκροβυστίᾳ) being yet uncircumcised." Thus the apostle cuts off boasting on either side. The Jew had no ground to slight the Gentile, nor the Gentile to slight the Jew. The grace of the covenant was exhibited and applied to Abraham *before* circumcision, and yet circumcision was instituted as a sign and seal of the same grace, righteousness, or covenant, to the Jew. I would further remark, as just criticism requires that similar renderings should be given to similar phrases in the same connexion, it seems an unaccountable liberty to render the same phrase, ἐν τῇ ἀκροβυστίᾳ, in ver. 11, as referring to the Gentiles, which in ver. 12 *must* be referred to Abraham's *state* of uncircumcision; while at the same time there is no pretended necessity for such a variation.

§ 29. Thus, I think, we may pronounce Mr B's favourite interpretation of the passage in question far fetched and unnecessary. But supposing he were indulged with Lightfoot's critical weapon,

* "Quæ" (ambiguum est, et referendum, vel 1, ad fidem: vel potius, 2, ad justitiam fidei, h. e. quam ex fide exceperat) "est in præputio."—*Estius.* "Fidei quæ" (vel, *quæ* fuerat; Erasmus, Pagninus, Tremellius, Flaccius Illyricus, &c., vel, *receptæ*, Beza, Piscator; vel, *quam* habuisse dignoscitur, Zegerius) "in præputio."—*Poli Synop.*, in loc.

I presume it would be but of little service to him; since there is another consideration that so blunts it as to render it inoffensive.

Now supposing, without granting, that Abraham's circumcision being a seal to him that the Gentiles should, in some after period, be justified by faith, were the meaning of the controverted text; what is the consequence? Why, if ver. 11 implies that he received a seal to assure him that righteousness (or, by a periphrasis, the righteousness of faith) would be imputed to the future Gentiles without ceremonial observances, works, or worthiness of their own; ver. 12 must in like manner, from the *connexion* of the two verses, necessarily imply, that he had the same confirming seal to assure him of the same important truth in relation to the Jews. He received a seal—of what? Of righteousness. What kind of righteousness? That which is of faith, as opposed to legal observances, works, merit, or worthiness of the creature. Who should be the happy objects of this favour? The uncircumcision; suppose the Gentiles. But to what end was such a seal given to Abraham?

(1.) "That he might be *the father*," or the appointed and highly-honoured pattern, "*of all among the Gentiles*," in the most distant periods, who should obtain righteousness and salvation of *free and sovereign grace*, exclusive of works of righteousness which they should do. Thus it was that he received mercy, without any works of the law; and therefore properly styled the *father* of all among the Gentiles who should have no pretensions at all to any ceremonial and legal righteousness of their own. And was this the *only* design of his receiving circumcision as a seal? Far from it; for—

(2.) Another very important one is immediately subjoined: ver. 12, "AND that he might be *the father of circumcision*,"—a SIMILAR PATTERN to the *Jews also*, that none of them may trust to the law, ceremonies, or any other consideration: and those among them who were beholden to mercy, as Abraham was, without works, were his CHILDREN in the same sense as the gracious among the Gentiles are. Thus it appears, that circumcision was to Abraham a SEAL *of the righteousness of faith*, or of *free grace*, not more to the Gentiles than the Jews; and, consequently, Mr B's attempt to confine the purport of circumcision as a seal, with reference to *Gentiles only*, proves abortive.

§ 30. Our last inquiry respected the persons *concerning whom* Abraham received a seal; but now another question returns—viz.,

To whom circumcision was a seal of righteousness? Mr B's reply is short and plain, "To Abraham *in particular*."* Herein, however, he differs from Dr S. For thus the latter writes:—"Though I object to the idea of circumcision's being a *seal* of the covenant, at least in regard of infants, and understand the passage just referred to as only saying, that it became to Abraham, and by consequence to all others who believed, a seal or attestation to their justification; yet I readily admit, that it was a *sign* or *token* of the covenant between God and Abraham in all who were circumcised."† And a little after:—"Circumcision, though it became a seal of the righteousness of faith to Abraham, could not be a *seal* to his *infant* posterity, at least in the same sense it was to him." In conformity to this principle he further adds, "It is easy to see that baptism cannot be a *seal* of the righteousness of faith—that is, of their *justification*—to infants, they not having *faith;* nor can it be in regard of them a test of new obedience, they not *voluntarily submitting* to it."

But have these assertions any foundation in Scripture or reason? And—

(1.) Is there any truth in the supposition, that nothing can be a test of new obedience, or lay us under additional obligations of duty, without our *voluntary submission?* Is not this singular notion, so much insisted on by our adversaries, confronted with the fundamental principles of morals? For it is demonstrable, from the nature and spring of moral obligation, that if baptism be a *benefit* to infants, as we maintain, it must be to them such a test, or *obliges* them to *additional* duties. Again, I would ask—

(2.) Is there any propriety in the supposition, because infants cannot *believe*, they therefore cannot be *justified?* or what amounts to the same, because infants have not actual *faith, therefore* their *justification* cannot be *sealed?* But all this stands on another rotten pillar—that there is no difference between a seal being *applied* to a person, and the *certainty* of his actual justification. On the contrary, is it not abundantly evident, that God's covenant of redemption, AS REVEALED TO FALLEN MAN, is of the nature of a gracious proclamation? If so, what necessity is there to suppose that there can be no *sealing* of such a covenant to any person without thereby certifying his justification? May not the Eternal Sovereign institute a *memorial* of His mercy which endureth from

* Page 313. † Answer to Dr A., p. 108.

generation to generation, to the intent that every lost sinner to whom it is duly administered, may be certified, as far as anything short of a miracle can do, that this gracious God does actually and incessantly exhibit *to him* the blessings of His covenant, with the merciful design to encourage his future faith, and to engage his grateful obedience?

(3.) May we not say, that such an institution is the *seal* of God's covenant, without supposing the efficacious *grace* of the covenant experienced by the sealed? For, *who* seals? God, by His commissioned ministers. *What* does He seal? His own gracious proclamation, exhibited to the subject. The voice of God's heralds is to this purpose: "Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, publishing to a lost world the most merciful terms of reconciliation; and if any suspect the *truth* of our message, or the *faithfulness* of our Divine Master, behold both ratified with His own SEAL!" I suppose it has been proved that circumcision *was not* designed, nor indeed *could* be, to Abraham or any other, as a *proof* of actual justification, without involving a great absurdity. Therefore—

(4.) It must be a seal, AS AN INSTITUTED RITE, which God affixed to His covenant. This *must* be its purport in reference to Abraham, as far as it *assured* him of anything; nor can it be denied, that in *this* sense, which I think is demonstrably the true one, it *ought* to be considered in regard of every individual subject of it. Thus the twelve patriarchs, for instance, had in their flesh, not only a *sign*, but a *seal* also of God's covenant: purporting, that He thereby proposed Himself *to be to them a God;* that they, in return, *may be to Him a people.* The fact of the institution sealing the covenant, and not their personal qualifications of any kind, was the *ground* of their obligation; and this *increased* with their years. When grown up they might thus reflect: "By this mark in our persons, we are *assured*, in consequence of what the Lord said to our father Abraham, that He is graciously willing to become, not only the object of our worship, but our all-sufficient portion. And, surely, this consideration obliges us, incontestably, to become His people, to love and serve Him with all our powers." But will any one say, that circumcision was not *to them* a seal, or not without their devout approbation of it? That cannot be, except we maintain this absurd position—that the very essence of a Divine institution depends on the precarious determination of

the sinful creature. This, however, is in perfect consistence with another position, equally absurd, viz., that what we do not *voluntarily submit* to, cannot be to us a test of new obedience.

§ 31. From what has been said, we infer, that the hypothesis which maintains, infants were not *sealed* by circumcision, because of their not having *faith*, or not *submitting* to it upon conviction, is untenable. Yet, as our opponents have treated this subject with undeserved contempt, we shall, *ex abundanti*, take another turn with them.

Now, if circumcision was a seal of righteousness to Abraham, and not to the infant subjects of it in the *same sense*, it must be owing, either to their being *incapable*, or to some *difference* in the original *institution*, specified or implied, or to some Scripture evidence whereby this distinction is made necessary. I affirm, then, in general—

That none of these considerations, nor any other sufficient reason whatever, can shew the *necessity* of the pretended *distinction*. Now, the question is not, Whether or no circumcision, as a standing rite, had *other uses* of an ecclesiastical or political nature? but, Whether it was a *seal*, on God's part, to circumcised infants? The former is not disputed; and therein it agrees with the institution of sacrifices, which were not only a type of the Messiah's atonement, but, in a secondary view, answered the end of a tribute, to support the priesthood. Nobody, I presume, will deny, but one institution may, by Divine appointment, subserve *various* purposes, moral, typical, ecclesiastical, and political; as numerous instances in the Jewish economy support the fact. Therefore, to enumerate several purposes, for which we may suppose circumcision was instituted, *besides* that of a seal of righteousness, is impertinent, when intended to conclude against the idea of its being a seal to infants. Yet Dr S. expatiates largely upon the different uses of circumcision, as a reason why it was not a seal of the covenant to infants. But how shall we reconcile the following passages with truth, or with each other?—"As to circumcision, it was a *token* of the covenant between God and Abraham. But what was the *purport* of that transaction? I readily agree, that the *grand* object of it was the coming of the Messiah, and our redemption by Him; on which account the gospel is said to have been preached unto Abraham. But this surely was not

the *only* object of it."* And again:—"Those matters in the covenant between God and Abraham, which seem to be the *chief*, if not the *only* ground or reason of circumcision, and which that rite was peculiarly adapted to express, are matters to which *baptism* hath no reference at all."† Has baptism, then, *no reference at all* to our redemption by Christ? or, is it conclusive to infer, that because the coming of the Messiah, and our redemption by Him, was the *grand object* of circumcision, but not the *only* one, therefore it was not a seal of righteousness to infants?

§ 32. Considering circumcision as an instituted rite, designed to afford the strongest evidence that righteousness was attainable *only* as a free favour; that it was God's *seal*, as the impression active of His authority, administered by His servants,—attesting, not that the subject is actually possessed of the spiritual blessings represented by it, (for *this* no external rite whatever is capable of, as before shewn, § 27,) but, that it is the Divine pleasure to *exhibit* therein to him the blessings of His covenant; that the fact of an exhibited *benefit* lays earliest infancy under obligations of future returns (§ 22;)—considering, I say, these things, it is evident—

(1.) That infants were CAPABLE of circumcision as a seal; if not, we must say, that the incapacity lay either in their apparent *state*, or in their want of a professed *subjection*. But *neither* of these is *essential* to being the subjects of the seal of God's covenant; and, therefore, are required qualifications in certain circumstances only—viz., in persons who are capable of dissenting and rejecting, as well as assenting and submitting. If any again insist that the concurrence of the subject is absolutely necessary to constitute the sealing, as this must be on the part of God and the creature; this would be only objecting to the sense in which I have explicitly declared I understand the term and notion of sealing, and which I think is demonstrably the only consistent sense in which it can be taken in reference to the institution either of circumcision or baptism. For the *general* thesis under consideration requires me only to shew, that there is a proper and consistent sense in which *any* Divine ordinance, intended to *exhibit* the blessings of the covenant, and to *oblige* the subject to a cordial reception of them, and other answerable returns, *may* be termed a SEAL *of the covenant;* and that baptism, being proved an ordinance of that nature, is pro-

* Answer to Dr A., p. 112. † Ibid., p. 118.

perly denominated *such a seal.* And the argument under present consideration is—that *such* an ordinance is *equally applicable* to infants and adults; and, therefore, that no pretended incapacity in the Jewish infants could be a sufficient reason why circumcision was not to *them* as well as *Abraham* a seal of righteousness. Let any one, therefore, reflect in what sense I understand the word *seal,* and he may immediately perceive the validity of this branch of the argument—that infants are *not incapable* subjects of it.

§ 33. (2.) But though circumcised infants were thus *capable* of having the *seal* of God's covenant in their flesh, is there not something in the INSTITUTION ITSELF, whereby it appears that circumcision was a *seal* to Abraham, while it was only a *token* to his infant seed? I think not. The words are very express and particular: Gen. xvii. 7, "And I will *establish my covenant* between me and thee, AND THY SEED AFTER THEE in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, TO BE A GOD UNTO THEE, AND TO THY SEED AFTER THEE." Ver. 8, "AND I WILL BE THEIR GOD." Ver. 9, "And God said unto Abraham, Thou shalt keep my covenant therefore, THOU, AND THY SEED AFTER THEE in their generations." Ver. 10, "This is my covenant, which YE shall keep, between me and YOU, AND THY SEED AFTER THEE; EVERY MANCHILD AMONG YOU shall be circumcised." Ver. 11, "And it shall be a token of the covenant betwixt me and YOU." Ver. 13, "And my covenant shall be in YOUR flesh for an everlasting covenant." On these words I observe—

[1.] That Abraham and his seed are here considered as one aggregate body, as well as in strict conjunction. God not only addresses Abraham in these terms, respecting the covenant and its token, "thee AND thy seed," which abundantly shews a *similarity* of design in their direction to Abraham's *seed* as well as to himself; but they are also addressed in these collective terms, YE, YOU, YOUR, without any discriminating clause. There is, therefore, in the institution itself no ground of distinction why circumcision should be a *seal* to Abraham and not to his seed, of which the latter were equally capable.

[2.] The grand covenant *blessing exhibited* to Abraham extends *equally* to his seed. "I will establish my covenant, ... to be A GOD unto thee, AND to thy seed after thee. And I will be THEIR GOD."

[3.] The *obligations resulting* from the institution are the *same*

to Abraham and his seed. For God said unto Abraham, "Thou shalt KEEP my covenant therefore, THOU, AND THY SEED. This is my covenant, which YE SHALL KEEP between me and you." There was not, indeed, an *application* of grace to all the circumcised alike, but there was an *exhibition*, and the *obligation* was general.

§ 34. It has been confidently asserted by our opponents, as before observed, "that there were *other* ends, uses, and significations of circumcision to Abraham's own person than those for which it was dispensed to his seed; such as—that he should be the father of all believers; that his seed should inherit Canaan; that Christ should come out of his loins." From whence they infer, "that the covenant of circumcision, *in every* of those respects in which circumcision was given Abraham as a *seal* of it, was not given to all the Jews and their children; nay, which his seed (indefinitely) had no promise of at all."* But is there anything in these dogmatical assertions better than magisterial trifling. For—

(1.) To say that circumcision was a *seal* of Abraham's *fatherhood* of all believers, or of his seed inheriting Canaan, is directly contrary to the apostle's assertion that it was a seal of the *righteousness of faith*. That these particulars were included as *inferior* parts of the Abrahamic charter is granted; but it is absurd to make them synonymous with the righteousness of faith; which our opponents must do to be consistent. Nor is it *true* that the promise of Canaan was *peculiar* to Abraham in any other sense than that he was *foremost* upon the list. (See Gen. xvii. 19, xxviii. 13–15.) Was not Jehovah a God to Isaac and his seed, and to Jacob and his seed, as well as to Abraham and his seed, and in the *very same* respect? And says the Lord to Jacob, in the passage last cited, "The land whereon thou liest, TO THEE WILL I GIVE IT, AND TO THY SEED." Seeing, then, that this Divine charter includes Abraham and millions of his descendants *in common*, and, as before shewn, without any ground of difference; and seeing the same charter has been confirmed to Isaac, and Jacob, and their seed, to make the circumstance of Abraham's *priority* on the list of persons benefited by the grant the foundation of the pretended distinction is to the last nugatory and impertinent.

(2.) To urge that the clause, of Christ coming out of his loins, was a privilege *peculiar* to Abraham, in such a sense as that cir-

* Fisher's Christianismus Redivivus, pp. 18, 19.

cumcision was to *him* a *seal* of it, but not to his seed, is equally futile; for though it was granted him that he should be the progenitor of Christ, yet it was said to Jacob as well, "IN THEE, AND IN THY SEED, SHALL ALL THE FAMILIES OF THE EARTH BE BLESSED." Nor must we confound Abraham's *carnal privilege* with the *righteousness of faith.* Circumcision is said to be a seal of the *latter* expressly, but not of the *former;* nor does there appear any reason or propriety in saying that the carnal privilege was sealed to Abraham, but so far as it was subservient to the Saviour's infinite and everlasting righteousness. Thus it appears, that as infants were *capable* of circumcision as a *seal,* so there is abundant evidence from the *institution itself* that it was equally applicable to them as to Abraham.

§ 35. However unfavourable to the purpose of Antipædobaptists might be the institution itself of circumcision, were there notwithstanding any *other* producible evidence from a subsequent Divine statute in their favour, it would alter the case proportionably. But this, I believe, is what none of those whose interest it is to produce it attempt to do; except Rom. iv. 11, which has been already considered, and I think fairly shewn, from the scope and design of the apostle, to be inconsistent with their confined view of it. The apostle's argument is, that both Jews and Gentiles are justified by the same Divine righteousness, and not by the observance of any law whatever, or any worthiness of their own: now, is it anything else but ridiculous trifling to contend, and still worse to make the apostle maintain, that the inestimable privilege of *righteousness imputed without works* is COMMON to Jews and Gentiles, BECAUSE circumcision was to Abraham ALONE a seal of righteousness?

There is, indeed, another passage that has been occasionally subpœnaed to serve this tottering cause; and that is John vi. 27, "Him hath God the Father sealed." "In the same sense," says the author last quoted, "in which the Father is said to *seal* the Son, to be the giver of meat that endures to eternal life,—*i.e.* authorised to that business, honoured with that office,—is God said to give circumcision to Abraham, whereby to seal him up, and settle him for ever in that glorious title, viz., *The father of all that believe;* in which sense circumcision was never given to any one of Abraham's posterity at all."* To this I reply—

* Fisher's Christianismus Redivivus, pp. 18, 19.

That there were in use among the ancients sealings for *different* purposes, as before observed; and a *person* may be said to be sealed when he receives a *commission*, is invested with *authority*, or bears well-authenticated *credentials*, &c. And thus was Christ sealed of the Father. His miracles were incontestable proofs of His Divine mission. But how does this help the notion, that neither Isaac, Jacob, nor any other beside Abraham, received circumcision as a seal. For where is it said or implied, that God *sealed Abraham?* It is said, indeed, that he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of righteousness. But who would infer, that because a promise, a law, or a sacred rite, was *received* by an individual for the use and service of himself and his posterity, it must signify one thing to the first receiver, and another thing to all the rest, when no such distinction is intimated, and when the case does not require it? Is it reasonable to conclude, that, when a person *receives* a certain privilege for himself and his heirs, collectively and indefinitely, it has one meaning when it regards himself, and another when it refers to his heirs, where there is no manner of necessity for such an interpretation? Would any one conclude, that because Moses *received* the law for himself and the Israelites, it spoke to *him* one thing, to *them* another? Finally; I conclude it must appear to the impartial reader of the preceding pages, that the rite of circumcision, CONSIDERED AS A DIVINE INSTITUTION, was appointed to all the subjects of it, indiscriminately, a SEAL of the *righteousness of faith*—viz., a declarative and *certifying* token that a man, whether Jew or Gentile, is justified by faith, as opposed to merit or worthiness of his own, or *saved by grace.* And, I presume, it must further appear highly proper to term circumcision a *seal* from the very NATURE of the institution; as it most assuredly *exhibited* the grand blessings of the everlasting covenant, and was attended with suitable *obligations.** And, moreover, since the ordinance of Christian baptism *exhibits* the same spiritual and principal blessings, with the same infallible certainty,

* As to what some have urged from Acts xv. 10, where circumcision is called "a yoke," and Gal. v. 3, where the circumcised are represented as "debtors to do the whole law;" it is manifest that nothing can be fairly concluded against what has been here advanced, since these passages refer, not to the NATURE and genuine design of circumcision, but to the ABUSE and perversion of it by legalists. Paul himself circumcised Timothy; but did this champion for sovereign grace and gospel liberty put on his neck a yoke, which, in its proper nature, use, and tendency, subjected him to legal bondage? Surely not.

and *obliges* to similar corresponding duties, it follows that baptism is properly and strictly a *seal* of the Christian covenant, or the exceeding great and precious promises of the gospel, to every person, indiscriminately, to whom it is duly administered, and may be so denominated *from its very* NATURE.

§ 36. From what has been said respecting the *nature* of baptism and of circumcision, and the propriety of calling them *seals of the covenant of grace*, it follows that there is an equal propriety in calling the *Lord's Supper* a SEAL; as it is a Divine institution in the Church, most assuredly *exhibiting* the great blessings of the covenant, and *obliging* the subjects to answerable returns of gratitude and obedience.

§ 37. (*Third,*) Another general conclusion from the nature and design of baptism is—That the actual unworthiness of minister or subject has no invalidating influence on the blessings and obligations represented in the ordinance. For if baptism be a *seal*, and does really represent the aforementioned particulars, *as a Divinely-instituted ordinance*, neither the holiness nor the sinfulness of the *minister* can alter its nature and design; for to suppose it a seal to a proper subject when administered by a *good* man, but not so if by a *bad* man, is to rest the validity of a Divine ordinance on a basis totally unworthy of God. It would also render the *baptized* liable to constant doubt and suspense, nay, absolute uncertainty, whether he has received the seal of God's covenant or not, in proportion as the moral state of the administrator was not certainly known; which inconvenience would be a source of perpetual confusion in the Church; and, therefore, the supposition is inadmissible for the clearest and strongest reasons. Again; to suppose that baptism, duly administered, is a seal only to the *true believer*, and not to *other* baptized persons as well, is attended with the same inconvenience. For if baptism be valid, and a seal to none but *true believers*, none but such can infer that any benefits are exhibited to *them* in particular *as baptized*, or that any consequent and answerable *obligations* are thereby incurred; and it also follows, that although the subject be a *true believer*, yet if he do not *know* it, or have not a *certainty* that he is so, he must be proportionably at a loss whether the ordinance be or be not to him a mere nullity. For, on the supposition, it is not the *truth* but the *assurance* of faith, can enable him to draw the inference, that he is in consequence of his baptism under any additional obligations

of duty. But how absurd to say, that none are thus *obliged* except they are *assured* of the truth and reality of their faith!

§ 38. (*Fourth.*) From what has been said, we may draw another corollary—viz., That for any person to desire *rebaptization*, (I mean, on supposition of agreement about the mode,) from a pretence that he was not properly qualified for his former baptism, or cannot recollect it, or was not active and voluntary in it, is virtually to deny that gospel blessings are at all exhibited therein *to him*, and that his baptism did lay him under any obligations of duty resulting from this institution, *because* he was not *then* duly qualified. But I think it has been demonstrated that consent is no necessary prerequisite of future obligation; that an administrator of baptism has a discretionary power of determining who is a qualified subject and who not; that no unworthiness in minister or subject renders the baptismal act a nullity. For a person, therefore, who has been baptized before properly, as to the *manner*, by a gospel minister, under the aforesaid pretence of non-consent, &c., to be *rebaptized*, or to *desire* it, is wrong, unreasonable, and unscriptural. This being the case, is not a desire in any to *make void* the first, that they may *submit* upon *conviction* to another baptism,—which they apprehend requires them to make an open testimony of their allegiance to Christ,—too much like the subject of a state who desires to *rebel* against his sovereign, by a temporary withdrawing of his allegiance, though introduced into his kingdom when an infant, that he might have the pleasure of *submitting upon conviction* to the legal and rightful authority of his sovereign? For, if baptism *does* lay every person, however unworthy, that has been baptized by a Christian teacher, under the obligation appertaining to that ordinance; to renounce *that* baptism, is to renounce *its* obligation, and, consequently, to rebel; and this *rebellion* is for the specious, but spurious reason of personally, openly, and fully acknowledging *future allegiance!* Again; is not this desire of *rebaptization* too much like that of a person who enjoys the privileges, and even *seals* of friendship, on another's part, but who has a mind to introduce a *quarrel*, by declaring that he has been hitherto under no *obligation* to his friend on account of any *former* seal of his friendly disposition and conduct, to the intent that he may, after the quarrel was made up, take occasion to *profess* his friendship to his benefactor?

I would here remark, that it is pretty evident from the natural

dictates of conscience, that one who rejects Christianity after he has been baptized *in due form* in his infant state, and brought up in a Christian family, is in a more *wretched condition* than an infidel who has not been *so devoted* to God. Nor is this a begging of the question, but an appeal to the common notices and impartial practical conclusions of mankind. Let but an intelligent apostate reflect, that IF what is represented in baptism be *true*, however unfit he was to comprehend and receive it, whether or not his *guilt*, in renouncing Christianity, would be the *greater* on account of his having been recognised by baptism a subject of Christ's kingdom? I verily believe there is no sensible person of that description but must conclude, from an attentive regard to the nature and design of the ordinance, that he incurs *additional* blame (supposing Christianity to be *true*) in consequence of his infant baptism. This, then, argues, on the supposition, a *benefit* received and *obligation* incurred; for otherwise there could be no ground of blame. If a gospel minister, who has a *discretionary* commission relative to the fitness and qualification of an admissible subject, *judge* (supposing, for argument's sake, he were under some mistake as to his determination of fitness) that an *infant*, in some cases, may be baptized according to the nature and design of the ordinance and the Institutor's intention, must this *act* of a discretionary commission,—and, I will boldly assert, an act consistent with the strictest sincerity of determination regarding the glory of God, the will of the Redeemer, and the good of the subject,—must this act be deemed a mere nullity? When the baptized afterwards reflects upon the fact, must he conclude, that because it was done without his consent, therefore he is not *obliged* by it as true baptism? For an answer to this question, I appeal, not to the passions, but to the rational powers, and deliberate impartial judgment, of thousands who love their Lord and His authority more than their own lives; and doubt not that their reply is, WE ARE UNDER OBLIGATIONS, even all those which result from the ordinance as a Divine institution. When I express my own sentiments on this head, those of my brethren will be echoed; and they are these: I look upon my baptism as exhibiting to me incessantly the forementioned blessings, and find my conscience constrained to answerable obligations of love, gratitude, and obedience, and all the particulars above mentioned. I have a rational certainty of the fact, and I am *certain* (pardon the expression)

that the action of a professional minister pouring water upon me, when an infant, in the name of the Father, &c., does really and *truly* oblige my conscience according to our Lord's intention in Christian baptism. Nor can I conceive of baptism answering the ends of exhibiting and obliging *more truly and powerfully* if administered this very day, than in earliest infancy; of its having any better moral tendency, or being better calculated to strengthen faith or administer comfort.* For if I cordially and morally approve of this transaction, of which I was confessedly a *capable* subject, performed thirty or forty years ago, and on supposition that it is to be done but once in my lifetime, I am at a loss to conceive why it may not answer every valuable purpose in reflecting upon and approving the fact, as if done this day. If it be a *fact* that I was *baptized into Christ*, in the sense before explained, as I am persuaded it is, the obligation to *put on Christ* is incessant and perpetual, and not at all weakened, but rather *strengthened* by the distance of time.

§ 39. (*Fifth,*) Those, whether ancients or moderns, who suppose a *real communication* of spiritual blessings *constantly attendant* on the ordinance of baptism, are under a mistake, if a just account of its nature and design has been given in the preceding pages. For there we find, that what the institution does *infallibly,* is to *exhibit* blessings, and *oblige* to duties; but as to any moral and spiritual favour *communicated* by it, this we should refer, not to any virtue in the duty, or any *certain connexion* between this and any supposed favour, but to the *sovereign pleasure* of the God of means. Much less have we ground to infer that baptism is the true Christian *regeneration,* or that a certain *immortalising spirit* is imparted with it, as some have whimsically affirmed.

§ 40. (*Sixth,*) From an attentive and impartial survey of the nature and design of baptism, deduced from all the passages of the New Testament relating to it, we may, again, infer—That to make the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ the *only,* or even the *principal* FACTS represented in the ordinance, is partial and

* "Sacraments were never intended by God to exert their virtue only *in,* or *during* the administration. For then it would follow, that the baptism once received, at whatever age, is no further to be improved by the party receiving it; and so, either baptism must be altogether a barren sacrament all our lives, but only during the little time of its administration; or else to *renew the* BENEFIT thereof, we must often *renew the administration* itself."—*Dr Ford's Practical Use of Infant Baptism,* Dial. ii., p. 10.

unjust. Mr B.'s third chapter is entitled, "The DESIGN of Baptism; or, The Facts and Blessings represented by it, both in regard to our Lord and His Disciples." And under this title he musters together no less than *fifty-six* Pædobaptist writers; who, having made some *concessions* respecting the propriety and expressiveness of immersion to represent the facts of Christ's *death*, *burial*, and *resurrection*, he imagines, greatly assist his cause. It appears that the chief reason of these concessions was their supposing the apostle, Rom. vi. 3–6, and Col. ii. 11–13, alluded to the mode of *dipping* the subject when baptized. But is there any *necessity* for such a supposed allusion? or is that the most *natural* and *significant* import of these texts? I think not; but am of opinion, with Mr Henry's Continuator, (and more than *fifty-six* others that might be collected, were the controversy to be decided by *numbers*, as certainly it is not,) that the allusion is not to any *mode* of baptism whatever, but to a *spiritual disposition* to which baptism, as a Divine institution, *obliges* the subject. "Why this burying in baptism should *so much as allude* to any custom of dipping under water in baptism, any more than our *baptismal crucifixion* and death should have any such reference, I confess, I cannot see. It is plain, that it is not the *sign*, but the *thing signified* in baptism, that the apostle here calls being buried with Christ; and the expression of *burying* alludes to *Christ's* burial." And again:—"We are both buried and risen with Him, and both are signified by our baptism; not that there is anything in the *sign* or ceremony of baptism which represents this burying and rising, any more than the crucifixion of Christ is represented by any *visible resemblance* in the Lord's Supper." * In addition to this, and what was said before on these passages, (§§ 18, 19, of this chapter,) I would propose it to any impartial person, acquainted with the nature of the mystical union between Christ and His Church, of which Paul often speaks, whether it is not a strict and weighty truth, that every Christian, though UNBAPTIZED, is *dead*, *buried*, and *risen* with Christ? and, as baptism is an *initiatory* ordinance, representing these things *in common* with various *other* momentous facts of a *quite different* nature, whether it is not *most natural* to conclude, that the apostle in these places urges a *particular branch* of duty, of being *conformed to Christ's death*, &c., from the GENERAL NATURE of the exhibitory rite, however adminis-

* Henry's Commentary on Rom. vi. 4, and Col. ii. 12.

tered, and not that he should press them to the same duty from the supposed *manner* of administration? And is not the *former* a topic far more noble and powerful than the *latter*, to answer the apostle's grand design?

§ 41. But it may be objected, "Supposing the apostle does urge the *special* duty of the mortification of sin, from the consideration of the *general nature* of baptism as *binding* the subject to *universal* duty, and consequently *that* very important one; and supposing that the apostle PRINCIPALLY alludes to this *general obligation* of duty resulting from the *nature* of the ordinance; does it not follow that the motive would be yet *stronger* if the mode was immersion?"

I answer, with Mr B., that "we have no more authority to *invent* a signification for any rite of holy worship, than we have to *appoint* the rite itself." * And if the texts in question do not *require* this additional allusion, it must be either *invented* to serve an hypothesis, or it must be sought in some *other* part of holy writ. There is no alternative, and therefore, let our opponents take which they please, their fond conclusion is not *proved* from these premises. That the sacred passages referred to do not *require* an allusion to the *mode* of baptizing has been shewn, and whether or not immersion appears to be the most proper mode from *other* considerations is not to the present argument; therefore, to *suppose* an additional force and propriety in them on that account is no better than begging the question.

§ 42. Let us hear Mr B.:—"Now, if such [to represent the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ] be the *chief design* of the ordinance; if *these passages* of holy writ [Rom. vi. 4, Col. ii. 12] be pertinently applied; and if there be any *correspondency* between the sign and the things that are signified by it, immersion *must* be the mode of administration." † Here is a bold conclusion drawn from premises couched under three hypothetical propositions; the *second*, I presume, is sufficiently enervated already; to the *first* and the *third* I shall make the following replies. And—

(1.) I affirm there does not appear from anything said in the New Testament, or anything urged by Mr B., that the *death*, *burial*, and *resurrection* of Christ are the PRINCIPAL facts designed to be represented in baptism. For, if no passages of Scripture

* Page 70. † Page 71.

are adduced, nor any consideration urged by our author to support his conclusion, except the two places above mentioned; and if the direct meaning of these passages amount to no more than this—that as baptism exhibits the blessing of the Church's union to Christ and communion with Him *indefinitely*, so it lays the baptized under obligations of *conformity* to Him as the surety; and hence His *incarnation*—His *obedience*—His *sufferings*, when He was devoted to the curse as the sacred victim, and (dreadful *baptism!* Luke xii. 50, Mark x. 38) when the cup of Divine justice was *poured out** on Him without mixture—His *crucifixion*, when His body was bathed in its own blood, the circumstance which above all others St Paul preached and gloried in—His dying for sin—His burial for three days and three nights—His victorious resurrection and triumphant ascension to heaven, are ALL illustrious FACTS, by which the Christian, in virtue of the said union, is bound to all suitable conformity;—if this, I say, be the apostle's meaning, as before shewn, it is plain Mr B.'s conclusion is ill founded. For, do not Christians *suffer* with Christ? are they not *crucified* with Christ? do not they *live*, and *sit*, and *reign* with Him in heavenly places? and are not these privileges in virtue of *union?* does not baptism represent that union *in general?* If so, why *confined* to these *three particulars* to the exclusion of others? "Know ye not," as if the apostle had said, "that so many of us as were baptized *into Jesus Christ*, were baptized into Him *at large*, (see Gal. iii. 27,) and *of course* into His death; that as He died *for* sin, so should we die *to* sin; as He buried our sin with His mortality, we should concur with His design by unremitted efforts to keep under subjection the body of sin; and as He rose to triumph over sin, we should not continue its deluded captives, but act as becomes a 'royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people?'"† Was not *Christ crucified* the *most important* theme of Paul's apostolic teaching? (1 Cor. ii. 2.) And, "God forbid," says he, "that I should glory save in the *cross* of our Lord Jesus Christ." "I am *crucified with* Christ; nevertheless I live." Now this union being *general*, when any one branch of it

* The almost constant scriptural mode of expressing God's infliction of punishment when the metaphor is taken from water. See Ps. lxix. 24, lxxix. 6; Jer. vi. 11, x. 25, xiv. 16; Ezek. vii. 8, xiv. 19, xx. 8, 13, 21, xxi. 31, xxx. 15; Hos. v. 10; Zeph. iii. 8; 2 Chron. xii. 7, xxxiv. 21, 25; Jer. vii. 20, xlii. 18, xliv. 6; Ezek. xxii. 22, 31, xxxi. 18; Rev. xiv. 10, and xvi. throughout, &c.

† 1 Pet. ii. 9.

is selected, it is according to the moral purpose in view. For it is evident, from the consideration of the *general and universal nature* of union and communion between the Church and the Divine Sponsor, represented in baptism, that had the circumstance of *crucifixion* answered the apostle's *moral design* better, he might have properly said, "being *crucified* with Him in baptism."

Now who sees not that the restrictive notion of baptism, *principally* representing the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, is inadmissible, being repugnant to an equitable axiom of interpretation, (§ 9, ax. 3,) that no meaning of a text, which is contrary to another passage *more evident than itself*, can be the true one? Nothing can be plainer than this, that the apostle Paul repeatedly considers baptism as representative of union and communion with Christ and His people *indefinitely*, (1 Cor. xii. 13, Gal. iii. 27, &c.,) but this Mr B.'s limiting hypothesis virtually denies. For it is the same as to say, *that a part is greater than the whole;* that a few particulars, however important, are *more principal* than the whole aggregate of the Redeemer's vicarious substitution.

Upon the whole, then, it appears, that to confine the signification of baptism to this part of the Surety's meritorious work, is contrary to the scriptural idea of baptism representing union to Christ at large in *all those respects* in which He is the sinner's substitute. Nor is it easy to say how *any mode* of ministration whatever is adapted to express this more than another. From whence I infer, that neither the death, burial, resurrection of Christ, nor any other *corporal state* through which He passed, were to be *at all* represented by the ordinance; for the Church has union and communion with Him in *all the states* of His suretyship, which were so various as not to be *capable* of an external representation in one *single act*, as baptism is. Which leads to another conclusion, that may serve as a sufficient reply to Mr B.'s remaining argument, which implies, that "if there be any *correspondency* between the sign and the thing signified, *immersion must* be the mode of administration;" and that is—

(2.) From the clearest testimonies of Scripture, and from Mr B.'s own maxim, it follows, that *if any facts at all*, of an *external* denomination, are represented in the mode of administration, we are referred, above all others, to the VISIBLE DESCENT of the Holy Spirit. Now this, as it is expressly called, without controversy, a BAPTISM, is a more certain clue to find out and ascer-

tain the mode mostly used than any other. I say *mostly used*, for I own it does not appear to me likely that one uniform mode prevailed even in the apostolic age. When, therefore, I object to the Baptist sense of Rom. vi. 4, &c., what I would be understood to mean is: these passages do not amount to a *proof*, either that our Lord's death, burial, and resurrection are the *principal facts* signified by baptism, or that the ordinance was *designed* visibly to represent those facts; that, so far from countenancing the *essentiality* of dipping, they are *no evidence at all* of any allusion to such a mode. For further confirmation of which position, I refer the reader to that part of our subject which treats professedly of the *mode*.

But why should Mr B. exert himself so much in any attempt to establish, from *two* controverted passages, that the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ are the principal facts alluded to and represented, while there are *many more* texts, and those *uncontroverted*, which represent the *descent and influences* of the Holy Ghost to be the things signified? Nay, I scruple not to assert it, there is *no object whatever* in all the New Testament *so frequently* and *so explicitly* signified by baptism as these Divine influences. (See Matt. iii. 11; Mark i. 8–10; Luke iii. 16, 21, 22; John i. 33; Acts i. 5, ii. 38, 39, viii. 12–17, v. 47, xi. 15, 16, &c. &c.) Yet these things he *prudently* overlooks. The reason is at hand: *plunging* is practised by himself and his constituents, and there is a greater resemblance between that practice and a burial, than between the said plunging and the active communication and application of Divine influences to the soul.

Besides, Mr B.'s maxim may be thus retorted: If in baptism there is an *expressive emblem* of the descending influences of the Spirit, *pouring must* be the mode of administration, for *that* is the scriptural term most commonly and properly used for the communication of Divine influences.

To conclude: When we impartially consider these things, and withal that the gospel dispensation is, in the strictest sense, THE MINISTRATION OF THE SPIRIT,* it appears *most probable* that the *various influences* of that Divine Agent are *principally* represented in baptism. I own there appears to me great beauty in this scriptural view of the ordinance, especially when considered in connexion with the other standing institution of the gospel. The

* 2 Cor. iii. 8, &c.

initiatory rite, which is not to be reiterated, represents the *promised influences* of the Spirit of grace, and by *exhibiting* these blessings, as about to be imparted repeatedly and successively, *obliges* the subject to unremitted and earnest applications for them ; while the *confirming* ordinance, which is to be repeated, represents the *death of the Lord*,* and by *exhibiting* this important transaction as a past event, *obliges* the subject to celebrate it eucharistically, or in thankful remembrance of the great sacrifice. The *former* teaches what the subject may *expect;* the *latter*, to what he is *beholden.*

* 1 Cor. xi. 26.

CHAPTER III.

OF THE PROPER SUBJECTS OF BAPTISM; PARTICULARLY, WHETHER IT IS THE *WILL OF CHRIST* THAT THE INFANTS OF BELIEVING PARENTS SHOULD BE BAPTIZED?

§ 1. Of the proper point in debate. § 2. How we may know what is the will of Christ in this matter. § 3. Pretended scriptural evidence against Pædobaptism, and the supposed silence of the New Testament about it. § 4. All these Antipædobaptist objections confronted with two propositions:—§ 5. (FIRST,) Baptism is APPLICABLE to infants; as appears, (First,) From the nature and design of the ordinance. § 6–9. (Second,) From the scriptural account of necessary qualifications. § 10. (Third.) From the concessions and principles of our opponents. § 11. (SECOND,) It is the WILL OF CHRIST our children should be baptized, as appears—§ 12–17. (First,) From the dictates of the law of nature, which are His will when not contravened by positive authority, to BENEFIT our children. § 18–28. (Second,) From God's constant approbation of this principle in all preceding dispensations. § 29–35. (Third,) From the language of prophecy respecting children in gospel times. § 36–54. (Fourth,) From New Testament passages, which corroborate the preceding arguments. § 55. Corollaries.

§ 1. HAVING, in the former chapters, investigated the nature of positive institutions in general, together with the nature and design of baptism in particular, we proceed next to consider who are the proper subjects of that ordinance. And here it would be impertinent to enlarge on the evidence we have in Scripture, that Jews and heathens upon renouncing their *false* and embracing the *true* religion were baptized; for about this we have no dispute. We do not inquire whether it be right or not to baptize qualified *adults* who had not been baptized *before;* nor, whether a profession of faith and repentance and a consistent moral character be necessary for *such;* but, whether *any infants* are to be baptized? or, to bring the question to a still narrower compass, "Whether it is the WILL OF CHRIST that *believing parents* should endeavour to have their children *baptized;* and, virtually, being

the other's correlate, whether it is the WILL OF CHRIST that *His ministers* should comply with their request in baptizing them?" The Antipædobaptists adopt the *negative;* it is my business to make good the *affirmative.* Nor am I apprehensive that our opponents themselves will object to this statement of the controversy, but will allow, that if what is proposed be *fairly demonstrated,* our cause as Pædobaptists is good, and our practice commendable.

§ 2. This being the matter in debate, our next inquiry must be respecting the *allowable medium* of determining the question. I doubt not but it will be allowed, to save proving what is so evident, that whatever shall appear to be the will of GOD, is equally the will of CHRIST, and *vice versa.* When I speak of Christ's WILL, I mean that will, *upon the whole,* as discoverable by us. This *will* being to us the *supreme law,* it is evident that wherever it appears, upon the whole, to preponderate, we are under proportionable obligation of concurring with that preponderation. Again, no one, who deserves to be reasoned with, will deny, that it is *perfectly indifferent* by *what means* this is ascertained, provided *it be* but ascertained; for if all *possible mediums* of proof be not allowed, then Christ's will, *upon the whole,* or all things considered, is not the deciding standard; which is absurd. Beside, this rule is consistent with our opponents' own principles; for, when they appeal on every turn to baptism as a positive institution, they can mean nothing else than that it is Christ's will, *all things considered,* we should *not* baptize our infant children.

The *positive evidence* of Scripture, in reference to baptism, or any other doctrine, privilege, or duty, holds the same rank in theology as *experimented evidence* does in reference to any hypothesis in philosophy. As, in the latter case, there is no disputing in favour of a system *against facts,* phenomena, and experiments; so, in the former case, no reasoning can be valid in *opposition* to *positive evidence,* or express discernible authority. This authority must be *discernible,* else it is no authority at all, for then *nothing* would remain to influence our determination. Nor can it be *positive,* but in proportion as it is express and unequivocal. For, in the present case, *positive authority* is that the reason of which we do not, and cannot *otherwise* find out. Therefore, that positive evidence, for or against, which, if ascertained, must needs preclude all further investigation, should *first* be attended to. And if on

examination no such evidence appear, the inquiry must be transferred to another *medium*, the nearest, in the scale of importance, to which it is applicable. Let any one propose a more just and satisfactory mode of investigating the subject, (*et erit mihi magnus Apollo,*) I shall venerate his abilities, and will sincerely thank him for the discovery.

§ 3. The first inquiry to be made being concerning the *positive evidence* of Scripture, I should produce all those passages out of the New Testament which relate to the subject, were not this done already ; but as it is done, the reader is referred to the beginning of the last chapter, to prevent needless repetition. Now, since it would be endless, as well as unnecessary, for me to examine every sacred text produced against us, or which may be so produced, and since that would be imposing on myself to prove a negative, it only remains that I should bring to the test those which our opponents lay the greatest stress upon ; and this step is the more reasonable, inasmuch as it is to be presumed their own interest in the debate would prompt them to produce the strongest. And here I must beg of my reader he will give me credit when I say, that I shall endeavour all along to place the Antipædobaptist objections in what appear to me the strongest light, and dwell chiefly on those points which are of the most radical importance in the controversy.

When we consider the dictates of nature in parental feelings,—the verdict of reason in favour of privileges,—the relation children bore to the institutions of ALL preceding dispensations,—and especially the language of prophecy in reference to the children of the gospel Church, it may reasonably be presumed, from their inflexible opposition, our opponents have something very express to urge out of the *New Testament* to counteract so strong a *probability* in our favour. And, surely, *express* they must be, to resist the united forces of such considerations. And yet, strange to think, I do not find that any of the Antipædobaptists pretend to adduce ONE SINGLE TEXT as an express and positive testimony for this purpose ! Therefore, the mercenary forces they place in front must be such as these :—"There is no *express precept*, or *precedent*, in the New Testament for Pædobaptism. That such passages are our *only* rule of doctrine and worship. That the Scripture *forbids* what it does *not mention*. That in religious matters it is not only sinful to go *contra statutum*, but to go *supra statutum*."

To these they add :—"That to imagine the first positive rite of religious worship in the Christian Church is left in so vague a state as Pædobaptism supposes, is not only contrary to the *analogy* of Divine proceedings in similar cases, but renders it morally impossible for the *bulk* of Christians to discern the *real* grounds on which the ordinance is administered. We have both express *command* and express *examples* for baptizing such as *profess faith* in Jesus Christ; but for *none else.* That the *qualifications* required of those for whom our Lord intended the ordinance, do *not agree* to an infantile state. That *faith* and *repentance* are prerequired in baptism. Hence Philip said, 'If thou believest with all thy heart, thou mayest,' (Acts viii. 37.) The command of Peter was, 'Repent, and be baptized,' (Acts ii. 38.) That the sacraments are not *converting* but *confirming* ordinances. The following scriptures are also urged :—Mark xvi. 16, 'He that believeth and is baptized.' Acts ii. 41, 'Then they that gladly received his word were baptized.' 1 Pet. iii. 21, 'The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ.'" Again :—"That the Scriptures *confine* its administration to such as *profess faith* in the Son of God. That our practice restrains it almost *entirely* to such as lie under a natural incapacity of professing repentance and faith. That positive laws imply their negative; that our Lord having given a commission to baptize those that are *taught,* without saying anything elsewhere, by way of precept or of example, concerning such as are *not* instructed being included in that commission, there was no necessity for him to *prohibit* the baptizing of those who are *not* taught; much less the baptizing of infants, that *cannot* be taught, in order to render the baptism of them unlawful. That since office, or duty, means an action conformable to *law,* it is plain that duty cannot be conceived without a law; that he does not perform a duty when the *law* or the *reason* of the law ceases."* These, I believe, are Mr B.'s *most capital* objections, which are *excerpta* taken out of his eighth chapter, entitled, "No Express Precept, or Precedent, in the New Testament, for Pædobaptism." But numerous as they are, their whole collective force, from van to rear, consists in these two things :—

* Pædobaptism Examined, pp. 168, 174, 176, 179, 181, 183, 184, 185, 187, 188, 190.

(1.) That such are the *qualifications* for baptism required in Scripture that children are *incapable* of it.

(2.) That, supposing they were qualified, since infants are not *expressly* and incontrovertibly mentioned in connexion with baptism, it is *not the will of Christ* they should be baptized; because, in a positive institution, nothing short of an *express precept* or *plain example* can indicate His will.

§ 4. On the contrary, to confront, to break, and to rout this boasted sophistical phalanx, I shall shew—

I. That the ordinance of baptism *is applicable* to infants, not less than to adults; or, in other words, that infants are possessed, according to Scripture, of all *necessary qualifications* for baptism, and therefore *are capable* of it.

II. That there is sufficient *positive evidence* it is the WILL OF CHRIST baptized believing parents should endeavour to get their children baptized. Let us begin with the former.

§ 5. (FIRST,) That the ordinance of baptism is applicable to infants as well as adults, appears hence—

(First,) That there is nothing in the *nature* and *design* of it but is equally applicable to an infant as to its parent. For—

(1.) What is its *nature?* It is a *seal.* This has been demonstrated in the foregoing chapter; and, I am bold to say, is capable of manifold demonstration. But *what* does it seal? Not that the subject, *rightly baptized,* as some have affirmed, is assured thereby that he is justified and saved: which must imply, if anything, that he who is *not so assured* was *not rightly* baptized; than which nothing need be more absurd. For, then, numbers baptized by the apostles themselves were not *rightly* baptized. And yet, being a seal, it must assure the rightly baptized subject of something. But what is this something? Is it that the subject IS *sincere,* that he HAS *a good conscience,* is *actually possessed* of certain personal endowments, or *certainly entitled* to new-covenant blessings? This is impossible, on any other hypothesis than the Popish figment of sacraments being effectual to the subject, *ex opere operato.* What it *assures,* therefore, is not anything *subjectively* to the baptized, whereby he is distinguished from others; but, as the only alternative, the *sealing* must imply an *objective certainty* afforded him by the Institutor. Now—

(2.) What is the *design* of this objective sealing? and what are the *truths* thus certified? (I say *truths,* for nothing which is not

true does the God of truth certify.) The answer is plain—*That He will be* A GOD *to all the sealed.* Or, more fully, "This is the record, that God gives, *i.e. exhibits,* to such eternal life, through the mediation of His Son, and the influences of His Spirit." But when I say, that God assures the baptized, in and by the *fact* of the ordinance, He will be *a God* to him, I do not intend the erroneous, but too common notion, that a declaration or promise of His being A GOD to any, in the economical revelation of mercy, implies a *certain connexion* between the *promisee* and his future (much less his present) *possession* of the Chief Good. For such declarations and promises cannot, I think, be conceived of, when addressed to man, under any other notion than that of a *proposal* from a first mover of covenant terms; for the *free nature* of man requires that he should be addressed in this way. But how man *answers* the Divine requisitions, or how he *comes by* a nature and disposition which, as an echo, makes a suitable reply to such a proposal, belongs entirely to *another dispensation*—namely, that of SOVEREIGN EFFICACIOUS GRACE; the Holy Spirit therein executing the decree of election. It is evident, therefore, that the Lord may be properly said to be *the God* (or the *chief good*) of a person or people, in Divine ordinances, independent of any adstipulation from the creature. For he was, in this sense, *the God* of the infant Jews, and uncircumcised in heart, no less than Abraham himself. But—

(3.) Who sees not that if it be a *truth* He may be *a God* to any, infants or adults, independent of their gracious disposition, the same truth may be consistently *sealed* and certified to them? This I insist *was* done to all, adults or infants, rightly circumcised; and this *is* done to all, adults or infants, rightly baptized. However some have made an improper use of the topic of circumcision in the baptismal controversy, one would think there is *one thing* at least that may be inferred from it—that the seal of God's covenant to man, be that seal and that covenant what they may, is APPLICABLE to an infant as well as to its parent. If, indeed, God's requisitions *could not* be answered in *any other way* than by the *believing consent* of the sinner, there would be some force in the objection of infants' incapacity and incapability of being the subjects of God's covenant seal. But this is not the case. For though infants are sinners, and have no believing consent, yet some infants, our opponents being judges, answer God's requisitions, or, in

other words, are justified. The truth is, the infant of a day, and the convert of threescore years, are accepted on the *same account*, though attended with different circumstances. Union with the Saviour, formed by a sovereign act of grace, answers all demands. All other considerations are merely circumstantial. If, then, infants are capable of answering the *grand condition* of acceptance, nay, *equally* so with adults, it is evident that they are capable of being under obligations, and still *more capable* of baptism, the seal of the objective certainty of exhibited blessings.

§ 6. (Second,) That infants are *capable subjects* appears also from the scriptural account of *necessary qualifications* for baptism. Infants are capable not only of what is *equivalent* to faith, repentance, the answer of a good conscience, a profession of Christ, &c., and a *subjective suitableness* for the institution, but also of *that very thing* from which these *qualities* derive all their value.

(1.) Infants are capable of what is *equivalent* to faith, &c., in the most important concerns, such as acceptance with God, justification to life, &c., and where these very things are pronounced *as necessary* as in the case of baptism. For instance :—"He that *believeth* shall be *saved;* but he that *believeth not* shall be *damned.*" "Without *faith* it is impossible to *please God.*" "Except ye *repent*, ye shall all likewise *perish.*" "He that *believeth not* God hath made him a *liar.*" "With the heart man *believeth* unto *righteousness*, and with the mouth *confession* is made unto *salvation.*" Now, what can be more evident than that these, and innumerable similar passages, are *not intended* to exclude from the benefits of redemption all *infants*, but UNBELIEVERS, IMPENITENT sinners, DISPLEASERS of God, and DISOWNERS of Christ? This conclusion does not, indeed, appear from the passages themselves, for they are as express and peremptory as can be, in *restricting* the qualifications for SALVATION, to FAITH, REPENTANCE, &c., yet, when we consider infants' capacity for the *former*, as moral and immortal beings, and their incapacity for the *latter*, (however peremptorily the conditions and qualifications are specified,) and when we consider the favourable regard shewn them, in every dispensation, by the Great Father of all, we are fairly led to conclude, that such passages of Holy Writ do not affect infants as *non*-believers, *non*-penitents, *non*-pleasers, or *non*-professors. For the positive virtues and graces which divines call conditions of salvation, *sine qua non*, are opposed, not to the *mere absence* of those qualities in their activity and exercise,

but to their *active opposites*,—unbelief, impenitence, &c.,—which can take place only in adults.

From the premises, then, it is clear, that if infants are *capable* of those things which are *equivalent* to faith and repentance, as qualifications for the *most important* privilege of salvation, they are also capable of what are equivalent to them as qualifications for the *less important* privilege of baptism. For, if the one be denied, so *may* the other; and if the one be granted, so *ought* the other. Infants are capable of a divinely-constituted *union* with the infinitely worthy Saviour, not less than adults; and are they incapable of the *symbol* of that union? Infants are capable of the *influences* of the Holy Spirit, not less than adults; and are they incapable of the *symbol* of those influences? He that CAN believe it, let him believe it.

§ 7. (2.) Infants are capable of a *subjective suitableness* for the institution. The nature and design of baptism require, as is plain to common sense, that *ostensible foes*, such as unbelievers, impenitents, and the like, ought not to be treated as *apparent friends;* that those who *evidently* love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil, should not be ranked with the *visible* children of light; but does it follow that infants must be classed with the former, and not with the latter? There is a *suitableness* in excluding *open enemies* from an external token of a *supposed fitness* to be subjects of the gospel kingdom; but does it follow that infants ought to be also excluded? Again, there is a *suitableness* in this, that none but believers, penitents, and professors, should be baptized *among adults*, because if they are not such, they must be positively the reverse; for in *them* there is no alternative, there is no medium between faith and unbelief, between repentance and impenitence. Of *them*, he that is not *for* Christ is *against* Him. But can the same be said of infants? Because they are not *intelligent* and *voluntary* subjects, must they be treated as foreigners—nay, as rebels? Is there no *medium* between loyal active obedience and rebellion? And because the infants of any community do not make an active part of the state, does it follow that there is no *suitableness* in their being subjects at all? But if there be a suitableness in infants being admitted proper subjects of a civil kingdom, *much more* is there a suitableness in their being admitted subjects of the gospel kingdom; the requisitions of the *latter* having a respect to *grace*, which is applicable to both alike, but

those of the *former* having a respect to *reason*, of which infants are incapable.

Moreover: it is apparent, that faith and repentance are no distinguishing characteristics of a Christian *as such*, but of a Christian *as adult;* these qualifications are not *essential* to Christianity, (if we intend thereby salvation through Christ,) for this may exist without them. Now, if the initiating ordinance of Christianity has relation to the *essence*, *nature*, and *design* of Christianity, and not merely to a *particular mode* of it, it follows that the ordinance is applicable to infants. To say, that this initial rite refers not to Christianity itself, but only to a certain mode or circumstance of it, is flatly to contradict its nature and design. For baptism exhibits *the whole* of Christianity, and not merely *a part;* its *essence*, and not a mere *circumstance;* as appears from the preceding chapter. It *exhibits* regeneration, sanctification, mystical union, salvation, &c., which are common to infants and adults. Nor does it appear, I believe, that *anything* is therein exhibited which is not *equally applicable* to both. Nay, were we, for argument's sake, to allow Mr B.'s account of what it represents,—viz., the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, and communion with Him therein,—it still follows, that infants are not less *capable* of these blessings than believers, penitents, and professors. They are also *capable* of being put under *obligation*, except we adopt one of the most absurd positions—that we ought not to be grateful, when grown up to manhood, for a benefit received in infancy. Thus we see, that *suitableness* to the nature and design of baptism belongs to the infant, no less than his parent.

§ 8. (3.) Again: They are capable of *that very thing* from which faith, repentance, and profession derive all their value. That there is in Scripture a connexion formed between *believing* and *baptism* in *adults*, is clear from particular passages, as well as the nature and design of the ordinance; but it is not less clear that this connexion depends on these qualities, not as they are *in themselves*, but only as they are *indicative* of something more essential.* These qualities are no further valuable than they are *expressive* of the person's moral and relative *state*. For, on our opponents' own principles, a preponderation of evidence *against* the latter would abolish the pretensions of the former. They will allow, that the most plausible *profession* of knowledge or faith is

* See Mr B.'s Apology for the Baptists, p. 2.

of itself no sufficient ground for baptizing adults; for if such a defect in a candidate's moral character, as demonstrates to the minister at the time of baptization the insincerity of his profession and the badness of his state, be proved against him, it would certainly disqualify him for the ordinance. It is clear from the nature of the case, that the before-mentioned qualities, rather than any *other* Christian virtues, are connected with baptism, because they are the most striking and decisive *indications* of a real change of state, or at least suitableness of state and disposition to commence a subject of the gospel kingdom. Does an infidel become a *believer?* Does a criminal become a *penitent?* Is the ignorant become *knowing?* Then they give a minister the best evidence the case can afford that they are proper subjects; that is, in a state suited to the nature and design of the institution. Could we suppose a person possessed of the clearest understanding of Christian doctrines, making the most devout and abundant professions of sincerity, of the soundness of his faith and the genuineness of his repentance, the integrity and circumspection of his conduct for a length of time past; but, while the candidate is standing ready for the ordinance, and the minister is going to execute the command of Christ, incontestable evidence is produced of his being that very day guilty of a notorious deliberate crime, which he had studiously concealed; what can the minister do? Must he forbid water? On what ground? His knowledge, profession of faith, repentance, &c., are now superseded on a *moral* account. On the supposition, his baptism was to have taken place *because* of those qualifications, but now he is excluded *because he wants* THAT VERY THING of which children are *capable*—viz., a state of grace and acceptance. But, if it be said that the reason of his rejection was because his profession was not *sincere*, it amounts to the same thing; for what is the difference between a state of *sincerity* and a state of *grace?*

§ 9. Should it be still urged, that "what is deemed by the Antipædobaptists as the grand qualification is a *credible profession*,—not grace apart, nor profession apart, but the *union* of both,—of which infants are incapable;" I answer—

This distinction, however specious, is a mere evasion. For if there be any force in it, it militates alike against their *salvability*. "For we are *saved* by grace, *through faith*." "We are *saved* by *hope*." "With the mouth *confession* is made to *salvation*." "If

any man *love not* the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema Maran-atha." "*Repent*, that your sins may be blotted out." Now if this *union* be requisite in *one* case, it must be so in the *other*, since it is required with *equal* explicitness in both. And salvation is connected, not with grace apart, nor profession apart, but with the *union* of grace and the expressions thereof in faith, hope, confession, love to Christ, and repentance. But whatever shews this latter instance to be fallacious is proportionably conclusive against the objection. Suffice it to observe, as before, that in *each* case, the Scriptures require these expressions and signs of a gracious state of those *only* who are capable of their active opposites, or the contrary vices. And they derive their value entirely from the *circumstances* in which they are placed,* and not from any supposed excellency resulting from their union as such.

Besides, that there is no such *union* as the objection supposes, no such indispensable connexion between these qualities and baptism, as founded on Divine *positive authority*, is apparent hence, that in the New Testament *different qualities* are required of *different persons*, according to the circumstances in which these persons are found. If any are charged with some notorious sins, the exhortation is, "*Repent*, and be baptized;" if any are in a state of inquiry after salvation, the qualification is, "believing on the Lord Jesus Christ;" if any hesitate in giving their assent to His Messiahship, "believing with the whole heart" is required. In like manner, the "confession of sins," "receiving the word with joy," "the answer of a good conscience," &c., are required in different circumstances. But what renders this argument irrefragable is, that our Lord was a *suitable subject of the baptism of repentance*, though *incapable of repentance*. He possessed, indeed, what was *equivalent* to it, but not the *thing itself*. The same may be said of *regeneration*, &c. The baptism of John required repentance and the confession of their sins of those only who were in circumstances *capable* of these things, but they were not *essential* qualifications; for what was essential to the nature and design of the institution Christ must have possessed, else there was no propriety and suitableness in His being the subject of it.†

* See Pædobaptismus Vindicatus, p. 15, &c.

† "Neque obstare debet, quod non *omnia* quæ itidem per baptismum significari solent, in istam ætatem [scil. infantiam] proprie congruant. Nam et *pœnitentia*, quam scimus baptismo designari, *majorem* certe in iis qui, cum vitam diu impuram egissent, vitæ totius mutandæ propositum testabantur, quam in aliis, locum habe-

As to what is called a *credible profession*, it is plain the epithet *credible* is predicated of profession, to shew, on the one hand, the insufficiency of *mere* profession, and, on the other, that the *supposed possession* of the thing professed gives to profession *the whole* of its value. Thus, in respect of promises and oaths, they are no further valuable, in a moral and religious sense, than they are exact delineations of the respective principles from which they are supposed to proceed. A promiser or a juror, known to be *false* in the matter promised or sworn, is detested. The value of these things arises from their *credibility*, that is, from the *supposed connexion* between the sign and the thing thereby signified. So far, then, it is clear, that if there be any profession *at all*, that profession ought to be *credible*. But from the consideration that no profession is available but what is credible, it does not follow that *profession* of this or any other kind is *necessary*. For the nature of the gospel kingdom, and of this institution, do not require, any more than the nature of civil government, that infants, because not capable of *professing* allegiance to their respective kings, should be considered as *no subjects;* though the nature and design of the one and the other require, that where it is suitable there should be a profession at all, it should be a *credible* one.

§ 10. (Third,) It may be made to appear, from the principles and concessions of our opponents, that infants are not *naturally incapable* of baptism; but the incapacity they object to is deduced from the supposed essentiality of faith and profession, as qualifications for the ordinance. For thus Dr S. writes in reply to Dr Addington's enumeration of benefits resulting from infant baptism:—"Now, sir, IF these advantages, which, no doubt, are very great and important, were the natural and proper effects of the application of baptism to infants; or IF the ceremony were *appointed* by God to these ends; or IF the omission of it did at all lessen the obligations of parents to take care of the education of their children, or of children to make all suitable returns to their parents and to demean themselves well in life, or of ministers to instruct and exhort them both to their several duties: IF this were the case, *I acknowledge it would be both cruel and impious to deny them to children.*" *

bat; in Christo vero, quem Johannes baptizavit, NULLUM; qui, ut Tertullianus loquitur, *nullius pœnitentiæ debitor vinctus est.*"—*Poli Synops. in Matt.* xix. 14.

* Page 291.

Here it is plain, from the *avowed connexion* subsisting between the consequence and the hypothetical antecedents, that nothing is necessary to render infants equally CAPABLE of baptism with adults, but a *Divine appointment* of its application to them, or its *useful tendency* when applied. And, therefore, no *incapacity* in infants, Dr S. being judge, can be fairly objected, but what arises from a begging of the question in debate. For, if it shall appear that it is the *will of Christ* believers should get their infant offspring baptized; or, if it shall appear that there is a preponderation of *solid advantages* in its favour, the pretended incapability urged is totally annihilated.

§ 11. (SECOND,) I am now to shew that it is the WILL OF CHRIST baptized believing parents should endeavour to get their children baptized. When I express myself thus, I would not be understood to mean, that those parents who are *not baptized*, and do *not believe*, are under *no obligation* with respect to their own baptism and that of their children; but our controversy with the Antipædobaptists does not require a greater universality than is expressed in the proposition. It must be left to the candid reader to determine whether the preceding pages evince the *capability* of infants to answer the nature and design of the institution. But our opponents contend, "That, supposing they were capable and qualified, since infants are not *expressly* and incontrovertibly mentioned in connexion with baptism, it is not the *will of Christ* they should be baptized; because, in a positive institution, nothing short of an *express precept* or *plain example* can indicate His will." The fallacious impropriety of connecting the abstract notion of a positive institution with the ordinance of baptism in its complex form, and especially in extending its *positiveness* to the moral *qualifications* of the subjects, has been shewn in the first chapter, to which the reader is referred. Now, against the remaining part of the objection I maintain, that, *on supposition* infants are not expressly and incontrovertibly mentioned in connexion with baptism, there is sufficient *positive evidence* in favour of Pædobaptism. For—

§ 12. (*First,*) The *law and light of nature* require, and consequently the *will of Christ*, that parents should introduce their children to all the *benefits* and privileges of which they are capable.

That infants are subjects capable of baptism (*capable*, I mean,

in the most proper sense) has been demonstrated. For, *baptism* being the SEAL of God, to be ministerially applied to all the subjects of the visible gospel kingdom, and *circumcision* being a SEAL of the righteousness of faith, the latter therein eminently agreeing with the former; it follows, that if an infant be *capable* of the one, it is *equally* so of the other. It remains therefore that we attend to the remaining parts of the complex proposition. I say then—

(1.) Baptism is a *benefit* and privilege when applied to capable subjects, possessing all the qualifications necessary to answer the scriptural design of the ordinance. That it is a *benefit* to such is apparent, when we consider what baptism when applied necessarily includes. It includes a relative change of state: thereby the subject is translated, ministerially, from a state of distance to a state of nearness,—is separated from the world and joined to the universal Church,—is thereby legally entitled to all the other external privileges of the gospel dispensation, of which the subject is capable, this being the rite of *initiation* into them. Again, it includes a dedication of the subject to Father, Son, and Spirit,—is a *seal* of God's covenant to the subject, assuring him, to his dying day, that therein are *exhibited* to him exceeding great and precious promises,—and, of course, lays a foundation for the most rational and interesting obligations of duty. And, indeed, the single consideration of baptism laying all suitable subjects to whom it is ministerially applied under such obligations, is alone decisive in support of the point under consideration. And here we may ask, If infants are capable and suitable subjects, as we have proved they are, and if the above important particulars belong to all these when baptized, *as such;* what greater *benefit* can we conceive to appertain to a Divine institution? Could Paul himself regard his baptism in a more *beneficial* light? For, if it be said that an adult has an opportunity at his baptism to *testify* his faith and repentance, to *profess* his subjection and allegiance to Christ, it is plain this is only confounding what are in themselves distinct—Divine *benefits* and human *duties*. To call the discharge of duty a Divine benefit, in strictness of speech, is to say that the *grounds* of moral obligation, and the *discharge* thereof, are one and the same thing; which is absurd. The grounds, motives, and encouragements of duty are Divine benefits, together with the ability, inclination, and the effective cause of compliance with duty; but, properly speak-

ing, *duties themselves* are not so. And this must necessarily be the case while man is free in his actions and accountable for them.

§ 13. If the above reasoning be just, and if I do not greatly misunderstand our opposers, *their* notion of baptism is *no benefit at all.* We consider the baptismal ordinance as a *seal* of God's covenant to *fœderati,* and of consequence the right to it a *benefit.* To this Dr S. replies, "If sealing be, as you have seen, a matter of *duty* rather than of right, to use this kind of language is much the same as to say that persons have a right *to do their duty.*" * But be it known, that this worthy author does not say, as indeed he could not with any colour of plausibility, that infants are *incapable* of being *benefited* by free grants and covenants, for thus he subjoins:—"A man may be included in a covenant or BENEFITED by it, who is *no way a party* to it, and whose signature therefore is not at all requisite. CHILDREN, for instance, frequently derive *advantages* from covenants which, with all the authentic forms of them, existed long before they were born." † The reason, therefore, why infants, according to him, are not proper subjects of baptism, is not because of any incapacity in them of being *benefited,* but because they are incapable of *duty.* And so essential is the subject's *duty,* on these principles, to the ordinance of baptism, that separate from this obsequious concurrence, the institution itself is not a benefit or a privilege, but a mere nonentity. Consequently, for any to disregard baptism, is not to disregard a *benefit* mercifully held forth to them, but the neglect of a *duty,* in the same sense as prayer, or any other moral duty, is neglected. On these principles, therefore, which represent baptism as *no benefit* in any sense but that in which the *performance of any duty* is so, it is no wonder that our antagonists should pronounce the baptizing of infants an absurd practice, for it is the same as to put an infant on performing duty! But if it be so, it equally follows, that baptism is *no benefit,* properly speaking, to believers. And if no benefit, it can lay them under no obligations of gratitude, for gratitude necessarily supposes a benefit. What they must lay for a foundation of gratitude on these principles is their *own performance* of duty, and that properly being no Divine benefit, their gratitude must terminate on *themselves.* But what are our opponents' *avowed grounds* of obligations of duty in this matter? Dr S. replies, "There can be no doubt that we are to consider it

* Answer to Dr A.'s Reasons, p. 106. † Ibid.

[baptism] as a solemn test, whereby we VOLUNTARILY BIND OURSELVES to new obedience. Nor can it be in regard of them [infants] a test of new obedience, they not VOLUNTARILY SUBMITTING TO IT."* Is this the language of a Protestant orthodox divine? Is our NEW OBEDIENCE founded on our OWN SUBMISSION? Is our OBEDIENCE obligatory in proportion as we BIND OURSELVES to it? Be it so: there is one consequence inevitably follows—viz., that no person in the world is under any *obligation* to perform what he does not voluntarily submit to, or to regard anything as a *duty* until he *binds himself* to the performance of it. A doctrine this, that will be always grateful to the human mind, in proportion as it is disaffected to the requisitions of its Creator! How much more rational and scriptural the supposition, that baptism, as a Divine institution, is a *benefit* conferred on all who are the capable and actual subjects of it; and, as such, exhibiting blessings and obliging to answerable duties? To conclude this paragraph, I will subjoin the words of a prelate on this subject, in whom the power of godliness, sound learning, and judicious moderation, seemed to unite their splendours:—"Either baptism is a *benefit* to infants, or it is not. If none, why then administered at all? but if it be," which was his real sentiment, "then why should the poor innocents be prejudged of it for the parent's cause, if he profess but so much of a Christian as to offer his child to that ordinance?"† We now come to shew—

§ 14. (2.) That as baptism is a *benefit* applicable to infants, the *dictates of nature* require our applying it to them; and, provided these dictates are the *will of Christ*, and if they are not contravened by positive authority, the conclusion is clear as the day—That it is the WILL OF CHRIST professing parents should solicit baptism for their children, and gospel ministers should baptize them.

Let us not mistake the state of the question, and the force of the argument. I do not say that BAPTISM is discoverable by the light of nature, but that the *revealed* account of it considers it as a BENEFIT; and that the law and light of nature require we should confer on our children all the benefits of which they are suitable subjects, and which lie within our power. This is of importance to be observed; for there is a very obvious difference between the *discovering* of a benefit and the *application* of it, when discovered,

* Ut supra, p. 109.

† Archbishop Leighton's Select Works, Let. No. 1.

to one rather than another. This distinction Dr S. overlooks, when he thus interrogates and replies—"Is *infant baptism* a duty the *light of nature and reason* teaches? This surely will not be pretended."* But this is artfully blending what are in themselves perfectly distinct. We do not say that BAPTISM—viz., the Christian purification in the name of the Father, and so on—is taught by the light of nature and reason; but is, on the contrary, a *positive appointment.* And what then? Does it follow that the light of nature and reason is not concerned in the *application* of baptism to one subject in preference to another? The ministerial commission to *baptize* (as well as to *preach*) is a *discretionary trust;* the gospel revelation is the RULE and positive directory; but can any one, who properly considers the nature of Divine laws, their separate and respective influence, the nature of positive authority in particular, hesitate a moment about the necessity of the *light of nature and reason* to assist in the *application* of that rule? To suppose that, by insisting on the necessary aids of the dictates of nature in the *application* of the Scripture rule in many cases, we derogate from the *true perfection* of the sacred volume, is a surmise demonstrably weak and impertinent. Suffice it to observe with St Augustine, "To reject the conduct of the *light of nature* is not only foolish but also impious;"†—with Tertullian, "Those *notions* and persuasions of the human mind that are *common,* are capable of making us wiser, even in *Divine matters,* provided we employ them in defence of truth, not for the support of error;"‡—with Hooker, "The will of God, which we are to judge our actions by, no sound divine in the world ever denied to be in part made manifest even by the *light of nature,* and not by Scripture alone;"§—with Chillingworth, "It is very meet and reasonable and necessary that men, as in ALL their actions, so especially in that which is of greatest importance, the choice of their way to happiness, should be left unto—*right reason,* grounded on *Divine revelation* and *common notions,* written by God in the hearts of all men; deducing, according to the never-failing rules of logic, consequent deductions from them. And he that follows this in all

* Answer to Dr A., p. 291.

† Augustinus de Trin., cap. vi.:—"*Luminis naturalis* ducatum repellere, non modo stultum est, sed et impium."

‡ Tertullianus de Resur. Carnis., cap. iii.:—"Est quidem et de *communibus sensibus* sapere in *Dei rebus,* sed in testimonium veri, non in adjutorium falsi."

§ Hooker's Eccles. Polity, book iii., § 8.

his opinions and actions, and does not *only seem* to do so, FOLLOWS ALWAYS GOD."* The influence, therefore, here ascribed to the light of nature, is not the *discovery* of baptism as a *positive* appointment, (which would imply a contradiction,) but the *application* of baptism to some persons rather than others, with the assistance of the Scripture rule. If the Scripture rule *clearly counteract* what *seemed* before a natural dictate, this latter, it is evident, should submit to the former; if not, and supposing revealed positive evidence out of the question, the natural dictate continues in full force, being, on the supposition, the *only* evidence remaining in the case. But if to this last-mentioned evidence be *superadded* any given degree of scriptural authority, the force of obligation is *increased* in that proportion.

§ 15. When I speak of the *law of nature*, in this connexion, I would be understood to mean nearly with Grotius, "that [regular] DICTATE OF RIGHT REASON WHICH SHEWS that there is in any [human] act, from its AGREEMENT OR DISAGREEMENT WITH [OUR] RATIONAL [AND SOCIAL] NATURE a moral turpitude, or a moral necessity; and, of course, that such an act is either FORBIDDEN OR ENJOINED BY GOD, THE AUTHOR OF NATURE."† And, with Calderwood, I would term any human act INDIFFERENT "which has no *moral* goodness or pravity; that is, which is neither enjoined nor forbidden by any law natural or Divine."‡ All human acts, therefore, *morally* considered, in their general and universal nature, are either GOOD, BAD, or, *secundum speciem*, INDIFFERENT; though no human act, in its particular and singular nature, *secundum individuum*, terminating in actual existence and attended with all its circumstances, can be morally *indifferent*. By the *light of nature* I understand with Doddridge, "that part of the law of nature which man by the exercise of his reason *has actually discovered*,"§ and not merely what he *may discover* by that means.

Here let it be observed, that as the reports of *sense* may be taken for true when there is no reason against them, because when there is *no* reason *not* to believe, that alone is a reason for

* Chillingworth's Religion of Protestants, Pref., § 12.

† Grotius, De Jure Belli ac Pacis, lib. i., cap. i., § x., 1.

‡ Calderwood, Altare Damascenum, cap. ix. De rebus adiaphoris et ceremoniis, p. 366.

§ Doddridge's Lect. Definit., lxii.

believing them: so, the reports of the *law of our nature* may be taken for true when there is *no revelation against* them; for to do otherwise would be to deny our assent to what, on the supposition, is the *best evidence*. And where *certainty* is not to be had, probability must be substituted in the place of it; that is, it must be considered which side of the question is the *more probable*. With whatever contempt some may affect to treat this rule, they should be reminded that the object of such contempt is *truth itself*. Besides, unless it be reasonable to put out our *candle*, because we have not the light of the *sun*, it must be reasonable to direct our steps by probability when we have nothing clearer to walk by. The only alternative is to wander and fluctuate in *absolute* uncertainty.*

Nor can it be denied, "that every man," as Puffendorf observes, "of mature age, and a sound mind, possesses so much of this natural light, that, using proper means and due attention, he may very well discover at least the general precepts and principles of the law of nature; and, at the same time, judge that these are perfectly suitable to his nature and state."† "But if anything be determined, by rational investigation, to be a part of the law of nature, this must not, on that account, be pronounced *opposite* to what the Sacred Scriptures deliver *more clearly* on the same subject; but should be distinguished as it were by *abstractions*."‡

§ 16. Having premised these things respecting *natural dictates*, as being of Divine origin, and of universal and perpetual obligation, when not contravened by the express will of the Supreme Lawgiver, who alone has a right to control them, we proceed to inquire what are some of the most important and *universally-acknowledged parts and principles thereof*, that relate to our present purpose.

The following things seem to be of that description:—"That man is a social creature, and the subject of moral obligation. That all injustice is wrong and evil, and *vice versa*. That to render all their due is justice; and to detain anything that is another's is injustice. That infant children are to be regarded as parts of their parents. That parents have a just right of putting

* See Wollaston's Religion of Nature, § iii., 14–16.

† Vid. Puffendorfium de Officio, lib. i., cap. i., § 4.

‡ Ibid., Pref., § 4.

their children, even in earliest infancy, under future obligations; or, in other words, that they *ought to benefit* their children, when it is in their power to do so. That parents ought to take the *best care* of their children they can, endeavour to provide for them, and to be always ready to assist them. That in order to the good of children, there must be some authority over them lodged by nature in the parents; that is, the nature of the case is such as *necessarily requires* there should be in the parents an authority over their children *in order to their good.* That parents ought *to dispose* of their children according to the *best* of their judgment. That as the child *grows up,* the case is still the same in *some degree* or other, till he arrives at the age reckoned mature; and very often longer. That parents, in consulting the *good* of their children, ought to adopt those means, which, according to the best of their skill, abilities, and opportunities, they find most conducive to *that end.* That children are laid under *obligations* to their *parents* in proportion as they are *benefited* by them; and to GOD supremely, as the ultimate source and first cause of all. That the *natural affection* which regularly and mutually subsists in parents and children ought to be observed and followed, when there is no reason to the contrary. For when there is no reason why we should not comply with it, its own very solicitation, and the agreeableness we apprehend to be in complying, are *preponderating* arguments. This must be true, if *something* is more than *nothing.* Nay, if this στοργή be only a kind of *attraction* in the mere matter of parents and children, yet still this physical motion or *sympathy* ought not to be overruled if there be not a *good* reason for it. On the contrary, it ought to be taken as a *suggestion* of nature, which should always be regarded, when it is not superseded by something *superior;* that is, by *reason,* &c. Therefore, not to act *according to* it, is not to act according to reason, and to *deny* that to be which is.* Consequently, that when parents do not act according to these *dictates,* without a Divine warrant to act otherwise, they lie against the truth, and *deny* themselves and their children to be *what they are,* and the *relation* that subsists between them. That when any do not *benefit* their *offspring,* and those in their *house,* who are not of age to *reject* the proposed favour, they act an *unnatural* part."

* See Wollaston's Religion of Nature, § viii., *passim.*

§ 17. From what is said, the conclusion is inevitable—That it is the WILL OF CHRIST His disciples should devote their infant children to Him in baptism. For—

The dictates of nature, uncontrolled by revelation, are the *will of Christ,* and our rule of duty, (§ 15.) THE WILL OF CHRIST, expressed in these *dictates,* requires us to *benefit* our children as they are capable, (§ 16.) *Baptism,* as the initiatory *seal* of God's covenant, is a *benefit* of which infants are *capable.* (See Chap. II., § 23–25, and Chap. III., § 5–10.) This evidence is not *eclipsed,* but *brightened,* by Scripture authority, as we shall see in the sequel of this chapter.

Let the reader carefully notice, that we do not suppose, by insisting on this argument, the insufficiency of *direct Scripture* evidence; for *this* has been frequently urged with advantage, to satisfy persons of the best dispositions and abilities. That is, reader, "some of the most eminent Pædobaptists that ever filled the professor's chair, or that ever yet adorned the Protestant pulpit." But since our opponents insist that what has been so often urged is not conclusive, and *modestly* affirm it is only calculated to catch "the eye of a *superficial* observer," they are desired once more impartially to weigh this reasoning, and then, if they are able, to refute it. Let them know, however, that hackneyed phrases without meaning, principles taken upon trust, and empty declamation, must not be palmed on us instead of solid arguments.

Were it necessary, it would be easy to shew that the principles above urged are no *novelty;* but are perfectly agreeable to experience, and to the practical judgment of the most serious Pædobaptists, both illiterate and learned. But waving this, proceed we next to another corroborating proof of the main proposition.

§ 18. (*Second,*) What we contend for is, that it is the WILL OF CHRIST we should *baptize* our infant children. In proof of this we have shewn, first, that the *dictates of right reason* require us to *benefit* them, and consequently to *baptize* them, as baptism is always a benefit when administered to *capable* subjects. We come, secondly, to shew, that God has constantly *approved* of *this principle,* in all *preceding* dispensations. In other words, that the *principle* of the last argument is so far from being *weakened* by Scripture evidence, that the Lord's *approbation* of IT, in His con-

duct towards the offspring of His professing people, in all the dispensations of true religion, is abundantly *illustrated* and *confirmed*.

Mr B.'s misapplied but favourite maxim, "Positive laws imply their negative," has no force in the baptismal controversy, until he demonstrates, in opposition to what is advanced, that the dictates of right reason must be *smothered*, or else that revelation *countermands* their influence. But to *demonstrate* the former, in matters about which, on the supposition, Scripture is silent, is no easy task. And the difficulty will be *increased* in proportion as the sacred oracles corroborate reason's verdict. Let us now appeal to these oracles.

§ 19. (First,) We appeal to that period of the Church, and dispensation of grace, which extended from Adam to Noah. The inspired narrative of this long space of time is very short; on which we make the following remarks. We then assert—

(1.) Whatever exhibition of grace was made to antediluvian *parents* was constantly made to their *offspring;* and, consequently, whatever *seals* of grace were granted to the former must equally appertain to the latter, if not voluntary *rejectors* of them. Therefore, all such parents had a *revealed* warrant to regard their offspring as entitled to the *seals* of the covenant, in *like manner* as themselves, according to their capacity. For—

(2.) All allow that Gen. iii. 15 contains the promulgation of gospel grace; nor are we authorised to question the interest of *children* therein with their parents, without an express contravention. For it were *unnatural* for a parent to *confine* such a *benefit* to his own person to the exclusion of his children, who are not only parts of his family but of *himself*. To which we may add, that the phrase THY SEED, though principally referring to the Messiah, respected Eve's *natural seed* as sharers in common with herself in the exhibition of mercy; and we suppose not less so than her HUSBAND. For this application of the phrase *thy seed*, compare Gen. xvii. 7, and Gal. iii. 16. Again—

(3.) It is generally agreed, that not only the institution of *sacrifices*, but also the *coats* of skin, (Gen. iii. 21,) were *emblematic* of covenant blessings; and not only so in common with mere types, but *seals* of the covenant, as earnests and pledges of exhibited favour. "Who will deny," says Witsius, "that God's clothing our

first parents was a *symbolical* act? Do not Christ's own words (Rev. iii. 18) very clearly allude to this?"* As for *sacrifices*, they were slain at God's command after the promulgation of the covenant. For, if Abel *offered by* FAITH, (Heb. xi. 4,) it presupposes the Divine *institution* of them. And this institution, most probably, took place when God—taking occasion from the insufficiency of the aprons of fig-leaves, which the fallen pair sewed together to cover the shame of their nakedness—Himself clothed them with coats of skins. And most divines agree, that it is very probable these were the skins of those beasts which were slain for *sacrifices*. However, God gave testimony to these oblations of the ancient patriarchs, that they were *acceptable* to Him; but this cannot be supposed without admitting them to be *divinely instituted*. Besides, a distinction of *clean* and *unclean* animals was observed before the deluge; which was not from *nature*, but the mere Divine pleasure; and, may we not add, with a particular respect to *sacrifices?* Now—

(4.) If, according to Witsius and others, these *skins of beasts*, and *sacrifices* were appointed SEALS *of the righteousness of faith;* I would ask, Was the covenant (using the term in the sense before explained, Chap. II., § 23, &c.) directed for the use of their SEED *in common* with the parents, and not the seal in like manner? For, if the seals be affixed to the covenant for *confirmation* of its contents, as well as, in another view, for signification, I would fain know by what rule of construction we can infer that the covenant *itself* belongs to the parents and their seed *in common*, while the *confirmation* of it belongs *exclusively* to the former? Is it not contrary to *custom* and *unreasonable* to conclude, that a charter of privileges, or a testamentary instrument, (which, by the way, express the nature of the covenant,) belongs to a man and his heirs ALIKE, but the confirming seal respects the former ONLY; while, on the supposition, the sovereign, or the testator, has given *no ground* for such partiality? Besides—

(5.) If the covenant itself be a *benefit* to the persons to whom it is directed, as it certainly is in *every* dispensation of it, it follows that the *confirmation* of it is so; for parents, therefore, to *deny* their offspring all the share in such common benefits they are capable of, without a Divine warrant, is *unnatural*, and an act of *injustice*. We may therefore conclude, that from Adam to Noah,

* Witsii Œcon. Fœder., lib. iv., cap. vii., §§ 4–7.

the *covenant* and its *seals* appertained to *infants* in common with their parents.

§ 20. (Second,) We appeal next to that period of the Church which extended from Noah to Abraham. On which we observe—

(1.) Whatever benefits and privileges belonged to the former dispensation continue to flow on to the present, if not *expressly* repealed; for the change of a dispensation, *of itself*, is no adequate cause of their abrogation. That would be as unreasonable as to suppose that the bare change from night to day was, *of itself*, an adequate cause of a man's being disinherited. Or we may as well say, that the abstract notion of an epoch in chronology has a real influence on the sequence of events. Whatever covenant privileges, therefore, belonged to Noah and his family *before* the deluge, if not expressly repealed, must belong to them *after* the deluge. But—

(2.) So far were these privileges from being abridged at this period, that they were greatly enlarged and confirmed by additional discoveries. For thus we read, Gen. vi. 18, "But with thee will I *establish my covenant;* and thou shalt come into the ark, thou, and thy sons, and thy wife, and thy sons' wives with thee." Again, chap. vii. 1, "And the Lord said unto Noah, Come thou *and all thy house* into the ark: for *thee* have I seen righteous before me in this generation." And again, chap. viii. 20, "And Noah builded an altar unto the Lord; and took of every clean beast, and of every clean fowl, and *offered burnt-offerings* on the altar." Once more, chap. ix. 8, 9, 12, 13, "And God spake unto Noah, and to his *sons* with him, saying, And I, behold, I *establish* my covenant with *you*, and with *your seed* after you. . . . . And God said, This is the *token of the covenant;* I do set my bow in the cloud." Hence we further learn—

(3.) That the covenant, or Divine charter, first given to Noah *included* the preceding; it was the SAME *covenant* with *additional grants;* for the Lord says, "I will ESTABLISH my covenant." Lest Noah should infer that the drowning of the world in wrath disannulled the well-known covenant, God dissipates his fears by saying, "I will *establish* my covenant."

(4.) On Noah's *account*, or *as belonging* to him, ALL HIS HOUSE or family was privileged. The privilege is, "Come thou and *all thy house* into the ark." The ground and reason of that privilege, "For THEE have I seen righteous." It is true, the natural dictates

of reason and affection, whereby "a father pitieth his children,"* and whereby an infidel "careth for his own, especially those of his own house,"† would have prompted this righteous person to bring *all his family* (except any adults *refused* compliance) into the ark, ("the like figure whereunto is *baptism*," as an inspired teacher assures us, 1 Pet. iii. 21;) yet the Lord was pleased to brighten his evidence and strengthen his obligations of duty by express revelation.

(5.) After the flood, the institution of *sacrifices* continued as the seal of the *first* part of the covenant; and the *rainbow* was instituted as the seal of the *additional* part, or, as Pareus calls it, "*appendix* of the covenant of grace."‡ And here it is worthy of notice, that as the first exhibition of the covenant and its seals respected the offspring of *fœderati*, and the *renewal* or *establishment* of it to Noah retained that privilege in full force; so also the *appendix* of the covenant comprehended his SEED.

(6.) Respecting this appendix of the covenant of which the rainbow was the seal, though we suppose, with Witsius, it was not formally and precisely the covenant of grace; yet we observe, with the same excellent author, "it does not seem consistent with the Divine perfections to make such a covenant with every living creature, but on *supposition* of a covenant of grace, and having a *respect* to it."§ And as this covenant, in its universality, implied the covenant of grace, we are not to deny but the promises of it were also *sealed* to Noah and his seed by the rainbow. (See Rev. iv. 3, x. 8.)

(7.) It is observable, finally, that NOAH, his SONS, and THEIR SEED, were *fœderati* in this ratification of the covenant; consequently, whatever *seals* of the covenant belonged to Noah, belonged to *his sons* and *their seed*, while non-dissentients.

§ 21. (Third,) Appeal we next to a very important period of sacred history—viz., from Abraham to Moses. On this, also, we make the following remarks:—

(1.) The Abrahamic covenant *included* the preceding dispensations, on the general principle that grants and privileges continue in force until *repealed*. Which repealing, if it be not either *express*, or arise from the nature of the case, in itself *plain*, can have no binding influence—that is to say, no existence at all—except

* Ps. ciii. 13. † 1 Tim. v. 8.

‡ Ap. Witsii Œcon. Fœder., lib. iv., cap. vii., § 19. § Ibid.

we maintain that we are *bound* to resign an important good without an assignable cause; which is, in fact, to maintain that we ought to *deny* that to be which is.

(2.) I suppose it will be granted, that the *principal blessing* exhibited in the foregoing dispensations was THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF FAITH; the great importance of which to the human race, in every age of the world, no one will deny who considers things *as they are*. This covenant, therefore, was in force to Abraham *prior* to what is called the Abrahamic dispensation; and, in this connexion, we might mention Lot and his family. But, behold—

(3.) A most explicit ratification of it, with *superadded* favours, Gen. xii. 3, "IN THEE SHALL ALL FAMILIES OF THE EARTH BE BLESSED." Chap. xvii. 7, "And I will *establish my covenant* between me and thee, and thy *seed* after thee, in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, *to be a God unto thee, and to thy seed after thee.*" Ver. 10, "This is my covenant, which ye shall keep, between me and you, *and thy seed* after thee; Every MAN-child among you shall be *circumcised.*" Ver. 12, "He that is *eight days old* shall be circumcised among you, every MAN-child in your generations, he that is born in the house, *or bought with money of any stranger*, which is not of thy seed." Ver. 24–27, "And Abraham was *ninety years old and nine*, when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. And Ishmael his son was *thirteen years old*, when he was circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin. In the *selfsame day* was Abraham circumcised, and Ishmael his son. And *all the* MEN *of his house*, born in the house, and *bought with money of the stranger*, were circumcised with him." Hence we learn—

(4.) The *nature* and *extent* of the ABRAHAMIC COVENANT or PROMISE. Whatever *blessings* are *promised* to ruined man, must be *in virtue* of the covenant of grace. All promised blessings, therefore, must *imply* an EXHIBITION of *gospel grace*. And the glad tidings of salvation through Christ preached to the GENTILE WORLD is expressly called—THE BLESSING OF ABRAHAM, (Gal. iii. 14.) Not that this *link* is the FIRST in the chain of exhibited mercy to the fallen race *in general*, or with a universal and unlimited aspect, if the reasoning in the last sections be just; but for its *explicitness*, and *precious* (because expressly diffusive) intendment, it may be justly termed a GOLDEN LINK. In this respect Abraham may well be styled—*the* FATHER *of us all;* not to

the disavowal of Noah, with whom the covenant was before ratified, or Eve, who received the *first* intimation of it, and who in *this* respect eminently may be called—*the* MOTHER *of all living.* The *covenant* of grace, in its external manifestation, containing *an* EXHIBITION of *exceeding great and precious* PROMISES to every human being on the face of the globe, to whom Providence directs the joyful news, may be compared to a flowing stream : it proceeds ultimately from the immense ocean of sovereign grace in Christ ; its *first* visible source we trace to paradise, where it rises in a small spring, and glides on to Noah. During this part of its progress there were but few comparatively who participated of its cleansing and healing virtues, though none were debarred from it. This continuing to glide along, without interruption, (notwithstanding God's awful visitation of a corrupt world by the deluge,) we discern through the person of Noah *another* source whence is poured forth a second stream, which empties itself into the former channel. The streams thus *united* become a river, which flows on to Abraham—a river to which *all* are invited, but *few* come, and these made willing by the omnipotent energy of *Divine influence,* which observes the laws of another, a HIDDEN dispensation, running parallel as it were with the former ; which was also the case in the preceding period. Then, through the highly-honoured person of Abraham we behold another mighty spring copiously pouring forth the waters of salvation, and again uniting itself to the former river ; and from him to Christ, with a wide majestic flow, it proceeds along the consecrated channel of the Jewish nation, gradually increasing by the accession of other streams, till it arrives at the Saviour's finished work ; where, impatient of confinement, it breaks over its banks on every side, and the healing waters flow to the most distant regions,—THAT THE BLESSING OF ABRAHAM MIGHT COME UPON THE GENTILES, (Gal. iii. 14, 8, compared with Gen. xii. 3, xviii. 18, xxii. 18.) Paul expressly says, that "the GOSPEL" (even the very same as the New Testament contains—*salvation by* GRACE) "was preached to Abraham ;" and (Heb. iv. 2) it was preached to his unbelieving descendants in the wilderness.

(5.) As it is *natural* to expect, that whatever exhibition of privileges the parents enjoyed should be extended to their children, in common with themselves, so we find that *in fact* they are *expressly included* in *this* dispensation as well as the preceding. The covenant is established between God and Abraham's SEED *in*

the VERY SAME *sense* as with Abraham HIMSELF, the essence of which is—TO BE A GOD TO HIM AND HIS SEED. And, lest it should be objected that the term *seed* refers to his *adult posterity* who should tread in his steps, to the exclusion of infants, all doubt is dissipated by the appointment of applying the *seal* of the covenant in early infancy.

(6.) *Sacrifices* continuing in full force to SEAL the covenant, till the Divine oblation should be made,—and the *bow* of the covenant continuing as a token and SEAL of it, until the Messiah's *second* coming,—at the commencement of this period is given an *additional* seal—CIRCUMCISION. The very *nature* of the rite shews that all *females* are excluded from being the subjects of it, as well as the discriminating specification—*every* MAN-*child*. Here observe in general, that children in this rite have the same privileges as their parents. The males are treated as Abraham, and the females as Sarah: *these*, therefore, had the covenant sealed in the same manner as their honoured mother. Again; though Sarah and her sex were not the *subjects* of this rite, they were constant *witnesses* to the institution; and, therefore, there was an important sense in which circumcision was a seal to Sarah and her daughters —a sense analogous to that in which sacrifices were.

(7.) Every domestic head being, in truth, a prophet, priest, and king in his own family, a question must arise — Whether the covenant and its seals are restricted to the parent head of the family, and his children, or else extended to the *other domestics?* Nor would the question be unimportant; for his *instructions*, his *prayers*, and *commands*, answerable to his threefold office, must be directed accordingly. To this question right reason replies— If the covenant and its seals are *beneficial* to all capable subjects, benevolence requires that they should be extended to the other *non-dissenting* members—except forbidden by indisputable authority. This is the voice of reason, and we find that this is the voice of God. The privilege is common to the seed, and to "him that is born in the house, or bought with money of any stranger, *which is not of the seed*," (Gen. xvii. 12.)

§ 22. It has been objected, "that the covenant with Abraham was a covenant of *peculiarity* only, and that circumcision was no more than a token of *that* covenant." But if so, as Mr Henry observes, "how came it that all PROSELYTES, of what nation soever, even *the strangers*, were to be circumcised; though, not

being of any of the tribes, they had no part or lot in the land of Canaan? The extending the seal of circumcision to *proselyted strangers*, and to THEIR SEED, was a plain indication that the New Testament administration of the covenant of grace would reach, not to the covenanters only, but their *seed*." * But it has been proved that circumcision *sealed* to Abraham and his seed *the righteousness of faith;* and, therefore, it does not affect the point in debate to contend that temporal promises were sealed *also*. The reader is referred to Chap. II., § 23, &c., where the subject has been considered at large.

§ 23. (Fourth,) We next appeal to the long and interesting period from Moses to Christ. On which let the following observations be considered:—

(1.) Whatever appertained to the Abrahamic covenant was not disannulled by the Mosaic dispensation. This St Paul asserts in plain terms, (Gal. iii. 17.)

(2.) It may not be amiss to take notice, before we proceed, of Job's family; who being, as is generally supposed, contemporary with Moses, and unconnected with his history, deserves a previous regard. Of him it is said, that "he *sanctified* his children, and rose up early in the morning, and *offered burnt-offerings*, according to the *number of them all*. Thus did Job *continually*," or, all the days, (Job i. 5.) On this I would only observe: let the *sanctifying* be what it may, the *sacrifices* must have been of Divine institution, and used by Job, being an eminently righteous man, as the *seals* of the covenant of grace—with respect to his children *separately*.

(3.) Superadded to the foregoing seals of the covenant is the PASSOVER,—a Divine rite of the nature of a sacrifice, instituted in memory of Israel's deliverance out of Egypt, representing and sealing spiritual blessings. "As to the *guests*," says Witsius, "they were, first, all native *Israelites*, who were not excluded by legal uncleanness; for *all the congregation of Israel* is commanded to solemnise the passover, (Exod. xii. 6, 47.) And, next, the *proselytes* circumcised and become Jews, (Esther viii. 17,) whether bondmen born in the house or bought with money, &c. Exod. xii. 48, 'When a *stranger* will sojourn with thee, and keep the passover to the Lord, let *all his males* be circumcised, and then let him come near and keep it, and he shall be as one that is

* Treatise on Baptism, p. 89; Sir J. B. Williams's Edit., p. 1164.

born in the land." * On this passage in Exodus, Dr Jennings observes these two things:—"*First*, That when a man thus became a proselyte, *all his males* were to be circumcised *as well as himself*, whereby his *children* were admitted into the visible Church of God, *in his right* as their father. *Secondly*, That upon this, he should be *entitled to all the privileges* and immunities of the Jewish Church and nation, as well as be subject to the whole law: he should be as 'one born in the land.'" † In short, not only men and women, but also young children, partook of this ordinance, *as soon as they were capable* of answering the revealed design of it, for no POSITIVE rule was given them on this head, like that of circumcision. It is manifest that since the injunction respected not only individuals of such a description, but also families *as such*, every member, without exception, had a *legal right* to the ordinance; and nothing prevented *infants* from a participation but what lay in the *natural* incapacity to answer the design of it.

(4.) "Besides the *ordinary* and *universal* sacraments of *circumcision* and the *passover*, some *extraordinary* symbols of Divine grace were granted to the Israelites in the wilderness, which in the New Testament are applied to Christ and His benefits, and said to have the same signification with our sacraments. And they are in order these:—The PASSAGE in the cloud THROUGH THE RED SEA—the MANNA which was rained from heaven—the WATER issuing out of the ROCK—and the BRAZEN SERPENT erected by Moses for the cure of the Israelites." ‡ To this we may add, among other things, with the author now referred to, the clear and familiar display of the DIVINE MAJESTY, and the adumbration of Divine mysteries daily *sealed* by religious CEREMONIES. Our subject does not call for an investigation of these particulars; but I would remark in general, that the principle for which we contend is so far from being weakened, that it is abundantly corroborated by the inspired testimony of every dispensation, and the Mosaic in particular:—That it is a common dictate of right reason children should, from their earliest infancy, share in their parents' privileges, as far as they are capable, when no positive authority contravenes it.

* Witsii Œcon. Fœder., lib. iv., cap. xii., § 11.
† Jewish Antiq., vol. i., p. 132.
‡ Witsius, ut supra, cap. x., § 1.

§ 24. From the preceding induction of sacred evidence in favour of children being sharers of the seals of grace in common with their parents, we conclude, that for the space of four thousand years,—that is to say, FROM THE CREATION TO CHRIST,—it was a rule *universally* incumbent on parents to treat their children as entitled to religious privileges *equally* with themselves, according to their capacity. And as a counterpart of what was observed of privileges, we may remark, that, in virtue of the same uniform principle, often when the parents were punished with excommunication or death, their infant children were included with them. As might be instanced in the deluge, the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, the case of Achan the son of Zerah, (Josh. vii. 24,) the matter of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram, the case of the conquered nations, (Deut. xx. 16, 17,) and many more instances, down to the destruction of Jerusalem. Far be it from us to suppose that the parents' crimes and impenitence made their suffering children incapable of *mercy*,—that mercy which proceeds on an invisible plan, and belongs to a purely spiritual dispensation. Yet that children, during their *dependence* on their parents, should share equally with them in judgments and mercies externally, is the effect of an all-wise constitution coeval with mankind.

§ 25. Mr B., when treating of *external covenant relation*, objects,—"All reasoning from *data* of a moral kind, and the supposed fitness of things, or from the natural relation of children to parents, is wide of the mark. As baptism is not a duty *naturally* resulting from our relation to God as *reasonable* creatures, for then it would be incumbent on *every man* to be baptized; as our obligation to regard it does not arise from any moral or civil relation in which we necessarily stand to our fellow-creatures, for then the same consequence would inevitably follow; and as this duty does not originate in the natural relation between parents and children, for then *all* parents, *whoever they be*, would lie under an obligation to have their infants baptized: so it is altogether vain to search anywhere for the proper subjects of baptism, except in the appointment of Christ and apostolic practice, these being the only rule and law of its administration."* But this objection, however plausible, does by no means affect the above reasoning; for *data* of a moral kind are very good ones when no

* Pædobaptism Examined, p. 286.

positive evidence lies against them. Besides, there appears to me a manifest impropriety (not to say impertinence) in making the *kind* of argumentation an objectionable matter; for it is demonstrable, that positive laws, though they conclude *affirmatively*, do not conclude *negatively*, except in matters that are absolutely indefensible on all *data* whatever. Nothing can possibly be established by sound reasoning but what is *reasonable and right;* and when this is done, it is plain that nothing but *affirmative* positive evidence can invalidate the conclusion. The conduct of our opponents in this instance is not unlike that of Arminians when disputing with Calvinists. It is objected to the latter that their reasoning is *metaphysical*, or may be reduced to the science of *metaphysics;* and to the Pædobaptists, that their reasoning is of the *moral* kind. But the cavil is well refuted by a masterly pen, part of which refutation, *mutatis mutandis*, we here apply:—"If the reasoning be good, it is as frivolous to inquire what science it is properly reduced to, as what language it is delivered in; and for a man to go about to confute the arguments of his opponent by telling him his arguments are *metaphysical*, [or of a *moral* kind,] would be as weak as to tell him his arguments could not be substantial, because they were not written in French or Latin. The question is not, whether what is said be metaphysics, physics, logic, or mathematics, [*morality*, divinity, or criticism,] Latin, French, English, or Mohawk; but, whether the reasoning be GOOD, and the arguments truly CONCLUSIVE. The foregoing arguments are no more metaphysical [or *moral*] than those which we use against the Papists to disprove their doctrine of *transubstantiation*, alleging it is inconsistent with the notion of corporeal identity that it should be in ten thousand places at the same time. I am willing my arguments should be brought to the test of the justest and strictest reason, and that a clear, distinct, and determinate meaning of the terms I use should be insisted on; but let not the whole be rejected, as if all were confuted, by fixing on it the epithet"—*moral*, consequential, or analogical.* "As to the arguments I have made use of, if they are *quibbles*, [adapted to dazzle 'the eye of a superficial observer' only,] they may be shewn to be so: such knots are capable of being untied, and the trick and cheat may be detected and plainly laid open. If this be *fairly* done with respect to the grounds and reasons I have relied upon,

* Edwards's Inquiry into the Freedom of the Will, p. 390.

I shall have just occasion for the future to be silent, if not to be ashamed of my argumentations. I am willing my proof should be thoroughly examined; and if there be nothing but *begging of the question*, or mere *logomachy*, or dispute of words, let it be made manifest and shewn how the seeming strength of the argument depends on my *using words without a meaning*, or arises from the ambiguity of terms, or my making use of words in an indeterminate and unsteady manner, and that the weight of my reasons rests mainly on such a foundation; and then I shall either be ready to retract what I have urged, and thank the man that has done the kind part, or shall be justly exposed for my obstinacy."*

§ 26. But what has Mr B. to urge in support of his assertion, that "reasoning from *data* of a *moral* kind, and the supposed *fitness* of things, or from the *natural relation* of children to parents, is wide of the mark?" *His* reasoning is, "If *baptism* were a duty, naturally resulting from our relation to God as reasonable creatures, then it would be incumbent on *every man* to be baptized." And what a dreadful consequence! But will our author favour us with the curious intelligence of *any man* unbaptized, in a Christian country, on whom it is *not* incumbent to be baptized? The objection confounds two things which in reality are quite distinct. It makes no difference between an obligation to perform a duty *before* it is revealed, and *after* it is revealed. Neither the righteousness of faith, nor any part of the gospel mystery, demand the belief and cordial reception of mankind, *before* they are promulged; such a revealed exhibition of mercy depending on the Divine pleasure, with which only a small part of the human race is actually favoured; but does it follow, either that the African Hottentots, who are without such a revelation, *are* under obligation to believe what they have not heard, or that any in a Christian land *are not* laid under obligation to believe and practise what is revealed to them? And does not this obligation "naturally result from our relation to God as reasonable creatures?" For can anything be more reasonable than that we should thankfully receive what revelation testifies is a proffered mercy? Methinks it requires no great labour to shew that if the exhibition of grace be a *benefit* to man, it is his DUTY to receive it, and that the denial of this tends directly to sap the foundation of religion and morals. In like manner *baptism*, as a

* Edwards's Inquiry into the Freedom of the Will, p. 393.

seal appended to the gospel covenant, is as much a matter of *revelation* as the covenant itself; but *this* is no sufficient reason why the seal should not be obligatory in as extensive a manner as the instrument sealed. On new discoveries being made to the creature, or benefits bestowed on him, new relations commence; and hence duties *naturally* result, answerable to these relations, with all that certainty and universality which belong to duties resulting from *unrevealed* relations.

Again; our author draws another consequence equally formidable:—"If the duty of parents to baptize their children originate in the *natural relation* between parents and children, then [sad alternative!] *all* parents, *whoever they be*, would lie under an obligation to have their infants baptized." We are still at a loss to find out wherein lies the inconvenience of the intended conclusion. For we have no objection at all to the idea, that *all* parents, *whoever they be*, IN A CHRISTIAN COUNTRY, lie under an obligation to have their infants baptized; but if my opponent objects to the clause, *in a Christian country*, as acknowledging *others not* being under the obligation, and therefore not originating in a *natural relation* between parents and children, it will do him no service, until he demonstrate either that this *natural relation does* NOT *oblige all* parents, without exception, to BENEFIT their children, in every part of the globe and every period of time, as we maintain; or that baptism is NO BENEFIT to infants, in opposition to those arguments that shew it IS a benefit. But the *nature* of the benefit, or the *manner* whereby it appears to be so, makes no part of the *criteria* whereby we should judge that the duty originates in the natural relation between parents and children. Whether the *benefit* relate to the body or the mind, to property or liberty, to politics or morals, to time or eternity, to the chief or an inferior good, is out of the question; and whether it *appear to be a benefit* by the medium of sense or testimony, of right reason or revealed facts, by direct assertion in Scripture or just consequence, by positive or moral evidence, or by any other mode whatever of collecting the *fact*, is equally immaterial. For it still follows, that the parent's *duty* originates in a *natural relation* between him and his child, be the *nature* of the benefit and the *mode* of ascertaining it what they may.

§ 27. Our author still objects,—"Were it allowable to reason from *covenant interest*, to the enjoyment of a *positive rite*, Abra-

ham and his posterity might have circumcised their FEMALES (!) in some way or other." * His reasons are :—"Circumcision is a *sign* of the covenant; that covenant extends its benign influences to *both* sexes; God has made us *reasonable* creatures, and He requires that we should use our intellectual powers on the nature, the application, and the design of all His institutions. Hence it appears," says he, "that a little *reasoning* on the covenant made with Abraham, and a few deductions from the nature and fitness of things, would have inferred the right of Jewish *females* to circumcision, in a manner similar to that by which our brethren endeavour to authenticate the baptism of infants." † On this singular argument *ad hominem* I make these two remarks :—

(1.) Our author seems to make no manner of difference between the solid deductions of right reason and the specious pretences of sophistry. For, according to him, nothing more is necessary to establish the propriety of female circumcision but to admit this *datum* of arguing from *covenant interest.* But we deny that any such consequence would follow, for two plain reasons. First, the *most evident* revealed account of the *nature* and design of the institution forbids it; in confirmation of which we appeal to impartiality itself, and the *universal* suffrage of Jews and Christians. Secondly, The phrase, *every* MAN-*child,* is so decisive in itself, and so often repeated in the institution, as to put it out of all doubt; in favour of which we might again refer to the whole body of Jews and Christians, who (*nem. con.*) understand the males *exclusively.*

(2.) Though we contend for the *proper use* of moral and analogical arguments, we do not suppose that they conclude *in opposition* to positive evidence, but only *in subordination* to it. Common sense, like common law, ought to influence our proceedings when not controlled by *superior* authority; but in proportion as decisive statute evidence appears, the operation of the *inferior* principle is suspended.

§ 28. Once more :—"It is worthy of consideration," says Mr B., "whether this doctrine concerning the *federal interest* of infants be not calculated *to harden their consciences* in an unconverted state, and to flush them with *false hopes,* when grown to years of reflection." This objection has been frequently urged by the Antipæ-

* Pædobaptism Examined, p. 287. † Ibid.

dobaptists, but with how little justice and force may appear from the following observations:—

(1.) If this federal interest consist, as the current of Pædobaptist writers hold, in the children being entitled to the *external privileges* of the covenant *in common* with their parents; how can this *tend* "to harden their consciences," or "to flush them with false hopes," *more* than their *parents?* Or when these latter *abuse* their privileges, are we to infer that such privileges are *calculated* "to harden their consciences," or "to flush them with false hopes?" But if such arguing be fallacious in the *one* case, it must be equally so in the *other.*

(2.) It seems absolutely unaccountable, nay, demonstrably absurd, to suppose that this federal interest, including Divine grants, blessings, benefits, and privileges should, in its *native tendency,* "flush any with *false hopes.*" The effects it is "calculated" to produce are such as these—repentance, caution, thankfulness, gratitude, obedience, &c. With equal propriety may we pronounce, on the principle of the objection, that the *federal interest* of Jewish infants, their church-membership, their right to the seals and shadows of grace in common with their parents,—that the possession of Canaan, the worship of the temple, the spirit of prophecy, and the promise of the Messiah,—that our Lord's preaching and mighty works among the Jews, were all "calculated" to *harden* the consciences of that people, and to flush them with *false hopes!*

(3.) It is the united language of those who maintain the children's *federal interest* in their parents' privileges, that an *abuse* and *misimprovement* thereof heighten their guilt and danger; which necessarily implies that the thing itself is a real good. Thus Mr Strong:—"That it is a special privilege for *parents* and *children,* that they [the children] are taken into their parents' covenant, will appear by these arguments and demonstrations:—It will *aggravate their sin* if they *abuse* it; therefore it is a mercy and a privilege *in itself:* for what is not a mercy and privilege in itself, that *cannot* add to a man's sin and judgment. Now as it is in riches and honours, and all the blessings in this life, they will be unto a man *judgments* if they are *abused;* therefore they are blessings in themselves—blessings in the *thing,* though a snare to the *man.* So this very argu-

ment, that is brought to prove that they are no blessings, and give no benefit, doth clearly prove that the *thing itself* is a privilege and a *blessing*. For a child to be disinherited, and cast out of his father's covenant, is a very great *judgment*, and the sorest of all outward afflictions that can befall a man; as we see in Cain: 'Thou hast cast me out from the face of the earth, and from thy face I shall be hid.' It is the sentence of excommunication that the Lord passeth upon Cain: and so upon Ishmael, 'Cast out the bondwoman and her son.' Now if it be a *great judgment* to be *cast out*, surely it is a *great privilege* to be *taken into* their parent's covenant. It is promised as a special *blessing* for the visible Church of God to continue in any man's posterity. So it was in Seth, (Gen. iv. 25;) in Shem, (Gen. ix. 27;) in the family of Aaron; and afterwards of Phinehas and David. And it is looked upon as a great *judgment* for a family and a posterity to be disinherited; as in Esau, Saul, and Cham. It is the greatest wrath that God doth pour out upon men in this life, to cast them out of external church-privileges. The apostle saith, [of the Jews,] 'Wrath is come upon them to the uttermost;' therefore if the wrath be so great in a casting out, surely there is a great deal of mercy shewed in the taking in. The apostle speaks even of an interest in the external privileges of the covenant as a very great matter, (Rom. iii. 1, 2.) To be cast out from being a visible member is the greatest judgment that can befall a person or people in this life, (1 Cor. v. 5.) Hos. i. 1–9, there is a pedigree of judgments set down, but yet the highest is *Lo-ammi.*"*

§ 29. (*Third*,) We come next to consider the language of prophecy respecting gospel times. On which observe in general—

(1.) That the *evidence* of prophecy, in its own nature, is direct and pertinent; and when its meaning is ascertained, its verdict (*cæteris paribus*) is indisputable.

(2.) There are some *subjects* of prophecy which, in their own nature, are more plain, while others are intricate. It is often difficult to ascertain with exactness points of chronology, the duration of empires, the identity of sovereigns, and the like; but the nature of the case is such, that, while we are investigating this question, whether the offspring of parents subjects of the gospel dispensation are or are not to be considered as parts of their parents, to share with them in all the church-privileges of which

* Discourse on the Two Covenants, pp. 208, 209, 212.

they are capable, we may with comparative ease learn the inspired meaning. Besides—

(3.) Whatever affirmative positive evidence our subject derives from prophetic language is *ex abundanti;* for since infants did actually make a part of God's Church at the time of delivering these prophecies, and ever had been held in that relation from the beginning of the world, it is evident that we ought to be influenced by nothing short of a decisive contravention from the Supreme Head of the Church, to alter our conduct towards our offspring; and whatever the spirit of prophecy pronounces in their favour, is the addition of light to light.

(4.) And relative to the *national* aspect of prophecies, though addressed to *individuals,* Bishop Newton (when speaking of the curse of Canaan, the blessing of Shem, and the enlargement of Japhet) says:—"It is thinking meanly of the ancient prophecies of Scripture, and having very imperfect, very unworthy conceptions of them, to limit their intention to particular persons. In this view the ancient prophets would be really what the Deists think them, little better than common fortune-tellers; and their prophecies would hardly be worth remembering or recording, especially in so concise and compendious a history as that of Moses. We must affix a larger meaning to them, and understand them not of single persons, but of *whole nations;* and thereby a nobler scene of things, and a more extensive prospect will be opened to us of the Divine dispensations."*

§ 30. If any prophecies represent decidedly Christian conversions in a *national* view, I think it must be allowed that the *infant* part, on a fair construction, must be included in such an idea. Out of many passages that might be adduced to this purpose, I shall insist but on the few following:—

Genesis xii. 3, "In thee shall *all families of the earth* be blessed." And chap. xxvi. 4, "In thy seed shall *all the nations of the earth* be blessed." These passages are not only precious *promises,* but also important *prophecies:* the former delivered to Abraham; the latter, being a repetition and confirmation of it, to Isaac. And the same was expressly made to Jacob afterwards, (chap. xxviii. 14.) It is evident the terms *families* and *nations* are here used synonymously; nor does there appear any necessity, or sufficient ground, for understanding them otherwise than *indefi-*

* Dissert. on Proph., vol. i., p. 14.

nite, comprehending the *general body*, great and small, of people inhabiting certain territories and provinces. Whether our Lord intended such *national conversions* in His commission to "disciple all *nations*," (Matt. xxviii. 19,) shall be further considered. Again, when Isaac unwittingly blessed his son Jacob, he said, (chap. xxvii. 29,) "Let *people* serve thee, and *nations* bow down to thee," &c. "When the Gentiles were converted to Christianity, the prophecy was fulfilled literally, and will more amply be fulfilled when 'the fulness of the Gentiles shall come in, and all Israel shall be saved.'" *

Psalm lxxii. 11, "Yea, all kings shall fall down before him, [the Messiah;] all *nations* shall serve him." Ver. 17, ult., "All *nations* shall call him blessed." I believe it is generally agreed, that divers passages in this psalm are quite inapplicable to Solomon, though entitled "A Psalm for Solomon," and equally so to any other king but the *Messiah*. It should therefore be considered as referring to Solomon but imperfectly, while it has its clear and full accomplishment in Christ and the gospel dispensation. And from these passages of this prophetic sublime psalm it appears—

(1.) That the Messiah's kingdom, in its *external* aspect, should have kings and their subjects, or *whole nations*, as such, included in it.

(2.) That in some future period this should be *universally* the desirable case. *All* kings shall submit and worship; *all* nations shall become His subjects, to serve Him and call Him blessed. To the like purpose is Ps. lxxxii. 8, ult.

Isaiah xix. 23–25, "In that day, shall there be a highway," &c. On which passage Bishop Newton thus remarks:—"By means of the Jews and proselytes dwelling in Egypt and Syria, Israel, Egypt, and Syria were in some measure united in the same worship. But this was *more fully* accomplished when these countries became Christian, and so were made members of the same body in Christ Jesus. And we piously hope and believe, that it will receive its most perfect completion in the latter days, when Mohammedanism shall be rooted out, and Christianity shall again flourish in these countries, when 'the fulness of the Gentiles shall come in, and all Israel shall be saved.'" † On the whole, it appears, that Egypt and Assyria, whether they stand for the converted Gentile nations indefinitely, or those countries literally,

* Newton's Dissert., ut supra, p. 83. † Ibid., p. 378.

should be on the *same footing* with Israel in this particular—viz., their conversion would be *national*, and *not* confined to adults *only*. On Antipædobaptist principles, none should be deemed subjects of the gospel kingdom externally, but those adults who make a credible profession; but how well this agrees with the prophetic representations of *national* conversions, let the impartial judge.

Very remarkable to the same purpose is another text in the same prophet, chap. lii. 15, "So shall *he sprinkle many nations*." On which observe—

(1.) That the term HE refers to Christ, is very evident from the context; and many of the Jewish doctors, as well as the Chaldee paraphrast, apply it directly to the Messiah; and so striking is the reference to *Christ*, that it is said "divers Jews have been convinced and converted to the Christian faith, by the evidence of this prophecy."

(2.) It is as clear, that the ACTION here ascribed to Him relates to the New Testament dispensation.

(3.) The obvious and natural acceptation of the term SPRINKLE, in this connexion, is that of *purifying;* and it undoubtedly *alludes* to those Jewish ceremonial purifications which were performed by sprinkling persons and things.

(4.) Though these ceremonial sprinklings under the law represented and typified the atoning blood of Christ, and the cleansing efficacy of His grace, yet it would be forced and unnatural to ascribe this internal, spiritual, and saving influence to MANY NATIONS. Therefore—

(5.) The prediction properly and directly intends that *external holiness* whereby *Christian nations* are professionally *distinguished* from others. And how great the privilege, how signal the honour, conferred on such nations! They are *set apart* by a gracious distinguishing Providence, and by the proselytising ordinance, to be to the Lord *a people*, while He exhibits Himself to be to them *a God!* Blessed is the people that is in such a case; yea, blessed is the *nation* that has *the* LORD for its God! But—

(6.) Must we *exclude* infants from being parts of these *nations*, and from the privileges of their parents? The law of nature, that is, the *law of God*, and the analogy of all Divine dispensations that were ever made known to man, forbid the contracted thought, while unsupported by any so much as pretended Divine warrant.

(7.) It appears from the New Testament records that the appointed ordinance of initiation into this state of relative holiness, individually and *explicitly*, is the Christian purification—BAPTISM. Consequently—

(8.) From the premises it unavoidably follows that the spirit of prophecy, in this passage, affords a venerable and sacred sanction to Pædobaptist principles.

Whether the interpretation now given, or Dr S.'s, who says of this text, "The plain meaning is, that His doctrine should descend like rain upon many nations and people," * be most agreeable to truth, let the impartial reader judge.

§ 31. This *national* (and consequently *Pædobaptist*) view of the gospel dispensation is implied in many more prophetic passages:—Isa. lv. 5, "Behold, thou shalt call a *nation* that thou knowest not; and *nations* that knew not thee shall run unto thee, because of the Lord thy God," &c. Jer. iv. 2, ult., "The *nations* shall bless themselves in him, and in him shall they glory." Dan. vii. 14, "And there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all *people, nations,* and languages, should serve him." Ver. 27, ult., "And all *dominions* shall serve him." Mic. iv. 2, "And *many nations* shall come, and say, Come, and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord," &c. Zech. ii. 11, "And *many nations* shall be *joined to the Lord* in that day, and shall be *my people.*" To which we may add—Matt. xxi. 43, "Therefore say I unto you, *The kingdom of God* shall be taken from you, and *given to a nation* bringing forth the fruits thereof." Rev. xi. 15, ult., "*The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord and of his Christ.*" Here I observe—

(1.) That the phrase, "the kingdoms of this world," in the last text, must be understood in its plain literal import, from the obvious opposition intended between it and the other, "the kingdoms of our Lord;" and for a like reason, the *latter* must intend KINGDOMS PROFESSEDLY CHRISTIAN. For the words are a prophetic representation of what *should* take place in some future period of the Christian Church. Now in what sense can the KINGDOMS OF THE WORLD BECOME the kingdoms of the Lord, and of His Christ, if not in that we contend for? They were *His* in every other sense *prior* to the date of this prophecy. They were *always* the Lord's as the God of *providence.* By HIM kings have ever reigned, and

* Remarks on the Christian Minister's Reasons, &c., p. 3.

princes decreed justice. Nor was there ever a time when the whole earth was not HIS, and the fulness thereof, with all its nations and kingdoms,—to enlarge or contract them,—to raise or to sink them,—to cause and regulate their revolutions and successions in every age. It remains, therefore, that Christian kingdoms are the *Lord's* in a sense similar to that in which Israel was *His*, with this difference, that the yoke of Mosaic ceremonies should be removed, and a spiritual evangelical worship introduced.

(2.) Our Lord (Matt. xxi. 43) speaks of the kingdom of God being transferred from ONE *nation to* ANOTHER *nation*. Now what less can we infer hence, than that the kingdom of God was not *abolished*, but *transferred* from one people to another; and that the *national* aspect of the former (at least so far as to *include* the children with their parents) should be the subject-matter of the transfer? If it be said that what was *taken away* from the one and *given* to the other did not imply, notwithstanding, the *church-membership* of infants; I reply, if the church-membership of infants, in the kingdom of God *to be* transferred, be an *essential* part of that kingdom, this essential part must be included in what *was given* to the other nation, or the Gentile part of the world. But the former is true, as might be easily shewn; and, therefore, so is the latter. And that by the *kingdom of God* we are not to understand merely the *preaching of the gospel*, is decisively clear hence—viz., that *this* was not what they once *possessed* and *gloried in*, but their *national adoption*, their church-state and privileges; and, therefore, this latter (from the scope of the text) must be what was *taken away*, and not merely a preached gospel. It is true the rejection of the Messiah, as the most signal instance of unfruitfulness, was the *cause* of their vineyard being laid waste, their branches cut off, and their kingdom transferred; but the apostolic resolution, "Lo! we turn to the Gentiles," was by no means the full accomplishment of the prediction. It intended, as what resulted from their rejecting the counsel of God against themselves, a *disinheriting* of the Jewish nation, which differs from their *not receiving the gospel*, as the effect differs from the cause. Besides, the phrase, "shall be given to another nation," is to be considered as a *judgment* on those from whom it is taken; but this could not have been the case if it meant no more than, "Henceforth the gospel, which is preached to you, shall be preached to the Gentiles *also;*" for that could be no judgment

to any, but a blessing to all. Nor is it true *in fact*, that the gospel was *taken from* the Jews otherwise than from any unbelieving Gentiles. The commission was, "Go, preach the gospel to every creature, *beginning at Jerusalem*." And Peter assures his brethren, that the *gospel* promise, or the exhibition of mercy, is "to them and their children," as well as "to those that were afar off." Nor do we find any *repeal* of this grant, this *universal* aspect of the gospel promise; and, therefore, what was *taken from* them was their CHURCH-STATE, whereby "wrath"—this predicted wrath—"came on them to the uttermost." *From this* they were *broken off*, (and not from the gospel call,) and *to this* the Gentiles were *adopted*. The *fall* of the one became the *riches* of the other. What the one *fell from*, the other was *promoted to*; and what can this be but their *church-state* as a body of people?

(3.) That remarkable text in Zechariah (chap. ii. 11) speaks of *many nations* that should, under the gospel dispensation, be *joined to the Lord*, and accounted *His people*. On Antipædobaptist principles, which deny the church-membership of infants and the validity of their baptism, this prophecy neither has been, nor is ever likely to be, fulfilled in whole or in part. Nay, according to them, it is absolutely *incapable* of being fulfilled. For infants and children ever have made, and ever will make, a very considerable part of a *nation*. But if none, on our opponents' hypothesis, are to be deemed as *joined to the Lord* but such as make a profession of faith and repentance, not only all infants and young children are struck off from visible church-membership, but, for aught we have *yet* seen, the *bulk* of a nation, or the *far greater* part. Nor will it avail them to say that this prediction refers to the latter-day glory; for be the day ever so glorious, and the success of the gospel ever so great,—let it be that all the adults in a nation shall be born to God in one day,—still the *younger part* of the nation, which is very considerable in number, must not be joined to the Lord; and, therefore, if our opponents be right, no NATION, properly speaking, is *capable* of being *joined to the Lord*, and of being *His people*, in any period of the gospel Church, however glorious.

§ 32. To this view of *national conversions* it may perhaps be objected, "That the term *nation* in the above places is taken *improperly* and *figuratively*, not for the *whole* of a people, small and great, but for a considerable *part*,—*i. e.*, for those in a nation that

would make a profession of their faith and repentance; as in Isa. xvii. 12, 13, &c." I answer—

(1.) In all equity the term should be taken according to the subject, which has no reference to the incursion of *armies*, but the accession of *proselytes*; which latter ever included the children with their parents.

(2.) In the passages first produced, (§ 30,) the words *nations* and *families* are used synonymously; which latter cannot be understood in that connexion to the *exclusion* of children. Therefore, to *limit* the term nation to signify those in a nation who profess faith and repentance, is taking an unwarrantable liberty—a liberty for which no tolerable reason, I think, can be assigned.

As to the objection, "that religion is a *personal* thing,"* either it has no force at all against Pædobaptist principles, or it must condemn all preceding dispensations. But, loath to impeach Infinite Wisdom for giving sanction to infant church-membership in every age of the world, we conclude that whatever truth is contained in the proposition, "religion is a personal thing," stands in perfect consistency with our principles. But if by religion's being a *personal* thing be implied that a person's *own consent* is necessary to make him the subject of religious obligations, I dare affirm that the proposition in that sense is of most pernicious tendency. Not less so than the modern notion of the "innocence of mental errors!"

Will it be objected, "that God requires to be worshipped *now* in spirit and in truth?" And pray *when* was it that He did *not* require to be so worshipped? Was Abraham's worship, for instance, of a *carnal* complexion? Was his family religion *less spiritual* than that of those who reject infants, as far as in them lies, from the bosom of the Christian Church? We cannot help thinking that those objections which are urged against the church-membership and baptism of infants, drawn from the great *spirituality* of the gospel dispensation, savour not a little of the *Socinian* leaven,† which degrades the Old Testament as much as possible, to keep its votaries in countenance when explaining the New. On the contrary, we think it reasonable to conclude, that the more spiritual and excellent the dispensation is, the *stronger* the argument in favour of Pædobaptist principles and practice.

* Dr S.'s Answer to Dr A.

† Vide Markii Medul., cap. xii., §§ 4, 8, 12, 15, &c.

Or will any say, "Supposing *all former* dispensations admitted infants to a participation of the same religious rites with their parents, it does not follow that they *now* must?" We say it *does* follow, by the most just and certain consequence, if we have no scriptural affirmative evidence to the contrary. For whatever source it proceeds from, it is a privilege in itself. Whether this *universal fact* of infant children having been included with their parents in church-privileges, arises from its natural reasonableness, and the apparent incongruity, unreasonableness, and unnatural severity of the contrary; in other words, from the original *constitution of human nature*, whereby its Divine Author has not only characterised it as *social* and communicative of benefits, but also formed the strongest *connexion* between the parents and their offspring, as to all the benefits and privileges of the former;—whether the fact arises from this, I say, or from a *covenant grant*, it should not be renounced but by the highest authority. And this authority must be, if at all existing, either an explicit repeal, or an implicit and virtual abrogation. We maintain that *neither* exists; and, therefore, we cannot renounce the church-membership and baptism of our infant children, without denying these things to be a *privilege;* that is to say, without DENYING a plain FACT.

§ 33. But an objection still more formidable yet remains—viz., "If the above prophecies refer to *national conversions*, does not that lead to *national churches?* And what then becomes of the Dissenting and Congregational plan?" I reply—

That a national establishment, if WELL ORDERED, appears more agreeable to the prophetic passages we have been considering than the Antipædobaptist plan; nay, more agreeable to the general tenor of revelation. I say "well ordered;" for, in the present case, the question is not how they *are*, but how they *may be* established. Nor does there appear any irreconcilable difference between a national establishment and Congregational discipline.

It is necessary that infants make a part of nations, but it does not at all follow that the civil magistrate should be the visible *head* of the Church,—prescribe to all the nation, to the greatest nicety, the terms of Christian communion,—publish acts which impose *uniformity*, rigid uniformity, in religious matters, under heavy penalties,—require obedience in things which no one pretends to be vindicable on scriptural or rational grounds,—and

especially should require of ministers the subscribing of *plain contradictions.*

On the whole, it appears that the language of prophecy, respecting *nations* becoming visibly *Christian,* is quite inimical to the Antipædobaptist hypothesis. We now proceed to investigate a few prophetic testimonies of another kind.

§ 34. Out of many that might be urged in favour of infants, let the following be considered:—Psalm cii. 28, "The *children* of thy *servants* shall continue, and *their seed* shall be established before thee." On which I observe—

(1.) That these words most undoubtedly belong to the Christian dispensation, as appears from St Paul's quotation (Heb. i. 11, 12) of the foregoing verses; for *those* he expressly applies to Christ, and *this* stands in strict connexion with them. It therefore follows, that these *servants* are the servants of Christ, and who can these be, but either His *real* or *professing* people? And whether the one or the other be intended, it follows—

(2.) That their *children* shall *continue.* But in what respect shall the children of Christians CONTINUE? Does it refer to the *continuation* of the *human race* through their instrumentality? Is *this* the full import of the sacred text, that Christians should not be surpassed by *infidels,* but should be fruitful and multiply and replenish the earth, *as well as they?* We cannot suppose that so low and jejune a meaning is worthy of the pen of inspiration. It therefore remains, that the prophetic promise refers to the religious privileges of the children of Christians, and imports that they should *continue,* (*Ishconu,*) dwell, abide, or tarry in the visible Church of God, as they were wont to do, along with their parents, in every other economy of grace that ever was. To this is added—

(3.) That *their seed* shall be *established.* It is hardly necessary to observe here, that by *seed* is meant *offspring* as such, without excluding the youngest infant. And whether the pronoun *their* relates to the antecedents *servants* or *children,* is immaterial, (though the connexion seems to refer it to the latter;) it still follows that the offspring—yes, the *infant* offspring—of Christians are to be *established before* the Messiah. In what sense *established?* and how *before* the Lord Christ? It cannot mean that the seed of believers should be established in the *grace* of the

covenant. We conclude, then, that the purport of the words is, that the offspring of Christians were intended by the spirit of prophecy to be *established*, confirmed, unmoved from, and settled in, their former standing *before the Lord* in His Church.

Should any contend for this general meaning, that the Christian Church should be a kingdom in perpetuity, to continue for ever as what cannot be moved, it will not alter the case; for the words clearly point out the *manner* and *means* whereby this is effected—viz., by the children of professors, and their seed being continued and established in the Church.

§ 35. The next passage I shall advert to is Isaiah lxv. 23, "They shall not labour in vain, nor bring forth for trouble; for they are *the seed* of the blessed of the Lord, and *their offspring with them.*" Hence observe—

(1.) That the prediction refers evidently to *gospel* times, and the accomplishment must be sought among *Christians.* For though it were maintained, that the spirit of prophecy here eyed the Jews in their glorious restoration to church-privileges after the fulness of the Gentiles was brought in, *that* can make no manner of difference; for the Jews when *called* will be CHRISTIANS as well as the called Gentiles. The *middle wall of partition*, which caused the celebrated distribution of the human race into Jews and Gentiles, has been taken down. And it is obvious that what the Gentiles now *do enjoy* by right of evangelical privileges, is the *very same* as what the Jews *would have enjoyed*, if wrath had not come upon them to the uttermost, to their unchurching and dispersion. The removal of the separating wall evidently implies an intended incorporation, and a community of privileges. And it is equally plain, that what they *would have enjoyed* if they had then received the Messiah, was the same as what they *shall enjoy* on their future reception of Him. Therefore, whether the converted Gentiles or Jews be intended in the words, they are CHRISTIANS, or subjects of the *last* and unalterable economy of mercy.

(2.) Whatever honours and privileges belong to "*the seed* of the blessed of the Lord," (and whoever be intended thereby,) their OFFSPRING are pronounced *blessed* WITH THEM, co-participants of the same benefits. But all religious benefits being either *internal* and real, or *external* and relative; and the *former* blessings do not devolve on the children, as *their* children, (which needs not to be formally proved to Antipædobaptists;) it follows, that these privi-

leges, of which the *offspring* of Christians are co-participants *with their parents*, are the external and economical benefits of the Christian Church. And if *baptism* be a *benefit*, as it demonstrably is to all capable subjects, and it is equally demonstrable that infants are such, it irrefragably follows that, according to the language and design of prophecy, the infant children of Christians are entitled to baptism with their parents. On the whole, the *connexion* between parents and children, relative to church-privileges and sacred ordinances, so reasonable and conformable to the law of nature in itself, and so countenanced by the sanction of Heaven, is here ratified and confirmed.

§ 36. (*Fourth,*) That it is the WILL OF CHRIST we should introduce our infant children into the Christian Church by the initiatory ordinance of baptism, will further appear from the corroborating evidence afforded in the NEW TESTAMENT.

But, previous to our investigation of particular passages, it is necessary to repeat a remark before made, that the TRANSITION from one dispensation to another is *of itself* no adequate reason for abrogating any benefit or custom appertaining to the former, which would be really a benefit under the latter. Hence we find (conformably to that wise and benevolent apophthegm, Mark ii. 21, 22) that the change from the Jewish to the Christian economy was *gradual*, and most tender. Nothing was altered without a manifest necessity, and that always for the *better*. Our Lord and His apostles, being native Jews, not only were observant of the *religious* worship and ceremonies of the Jewish Church, but also complied with their innocent *civil customs*. It is beyond all reasonable doubt, that *baptism*, as a purifying rite, and the holy *supper*, as a solemn Jewish festival, were in use before their appointment as standing ordinances in the Church.* The apostle Paul assures us (Heb. ix. 10) there were *before* Christ *divers baptisms;* therefore the baptism of the New Testament has nothing new but its appointment to the *particular purpose* of proselyting into the Messiah's visible and universal Church. And this is perfectly conformable to the Divine proceedings in former periods, as might be instanced in the appointment of the *rainbow* as a token and seal of the covenant, the Mosaic institution of *sacrifices*, &c.

* See, among others, the following authors on this head:—Witsius's Econ., book iv., cap. xvi., § 2, also §§ 3-10; Godwyn's Moses and Aaron, lib. iii., chap. ii.; Hammond's Letter, q. iv., § 5; Grotius in Matt. iii. 6, xxvi. 26-30, xxviii. 18.

These things duly considered, it must be a weak prejudice, a false notion taken upon trust, unsupported by one solid principle, that there is anything in the *mere change* of a dispensation which implies an abolition of former *privileges*, and a promiscuous annihilation of *every part* of church-relations and connexions. The *substance* of true religion is the same in all periods; and to suppose otherwise, would be as ridiculous as to suppose that whenever a man changes his *clothes*, his *body too* is metamorphosed! The spiritual and moral parts of religion are the same now as ever; and though the gospel presents to us new *objects*, or rather the same objects in a clearer light, yet the *principles* of true piety, *faith, love*, &c., continue invariably the same in every age. Again, duties of *natural obligation* are no more superseded by any change of dispensation in the Church, than the principles of common sense are superseded by true philosophy. Whatever, therefore, appears of natural obligation, and meets with no revealed *positive* interruption, flows on uniformly, and quite unaffected by a mere change of economy.

Of this *invariable* nature, we insist, is the obligation of parents to *benefit* their children by introducing them to a participation of their *own* privileges, even *all* those of which they are suitable subjects, be these privileges what they may; for, properly speaking, their *nature* does not constitute the *criterion* whereby we judge of the obligation, but the *capacity* and *suitableness* of the subject. It has been, I think, demonstrated that baptism is an ordinance of which infants are not less capable than their parents,—that they possess all necessary suitableness and qualifications to answer its nature and design,—and, therefore, that the obligation of parents to baptize them is absolute and strong. This being the case, nothing short of a Divine *express warrant* should influence any Christian parent to the contrary. But Scripture is so far from affording any such evidence, that it abounds with corroborating proofs to the contrary. We have appealed to every successive dispensation of revealed religion; we have appealed to the language of prophecy relative to gospel times, whereby the original thesis acquired additional confirmation; and now we cheerfully appeal to the New Testament records.

§ 37. John the Baptist, or the Baptizer, makes his appearance as a Jew among the Jews,—in spirit, aspect, and manners another Elijah. But *whom* does he *baptize?* *Who* were the subjects of his extraordinary *purification?* "Jerusalem, and all Judea, and

all the region round about Jordan," (Matt. iii. 5–7.) "All the people that heard him, except the Pharisees and lawyers," (Luke vii. 29, 30.) The whole account of the subjects of his baptism is but short and general, as may be seen at one view, Chap. II., § 2, &c. On which I remark—

Towards an accurate and judicious interpretation of this concise account, in reference to the *particulars* of our present inquiry, it is necessary to keep a steady eye upon the proper and allowable *data* for that purpose. The Antipædobaptists lay *this* down as a general rule:—"If the Scripture be *silent* about infants as the subjects of baptism, or even not *decisively express* in their favour, we are to take it for *granted* that they were *not* baptized." To face this cannon, however formidable, we venture to plant another: —"If the Scripture be silent about infants as the subjects of baptism, or even not decisively express *against them,* we are to take it for *granted* that they WERE baptized with their parents." The general reason of this rule has been already produced repeatedly; but with regard to its propriety and just application in the case before us, let the following things be observed:—

(1.) If John's baptism was *beneficial* to the parents, *as a Divine institution,* and their children were equally *capable* of being the subjects of it with themselves, (which our opponents, in fact, allow, by promising to accede to our practice on the evidence of a clear precept or example, which they could not promise to do on supposition of absolute incapability,) there appears some reason and propriety *for* Pædobaptism, and nothing against it.

(2.) If we consider the constitution, the genius, the state and circumstances of that Church of which John lived and died a member, and the persons who were the subjects of his baptism, we may safely conclude that infants *were* partakers of the cleansing rite with their parents.

John was a *Jew,* and so were those, *all* those, he baptized; nor did they cease to be members of the Jewish Church on account of his baptism. Their minds were indeed raised and directed to Christ as one who would baptize them with the Holy Ghost; but *that* did not change their church-relation any more than the believing lively views and longing expectations of the patriarchs, prophets, and other saints, in reference to the future kingdom of the Messiah, did change *their* church-state.

Now what was the *nature* of that *rite* of which John was the

appointed administrator? I answer, It was a Jewish cleansing, or ceremonial purification. In proof of which assertion, (omitting numerous respectable authorities that might be produced, sufficient at least to exculpate from the charge of novelty,) let this consideration be duly attended to:—That, independent of the testimonies of the Jewish doctors concerning proselyte-baptism, since we are certified by the pen of inspiration (Heb. ix. 10) there were *divers* BAPTISMS in use among the Jews, we *ought not* to consider John's baptizations as any other than these Jewish purifications and cleansings, any further than we are *necessitated* to do so from the New Testament records. It is therefore incumbent on those who hold that this rite was of a *different* nature, to shew clearly wherein the *difference* consisted, or else be content with the censure due to those who adopt an hypothesis without proof. Convinced, however, that these Divine records favour no such discrimination as the abettors of that hypothesis contend for, we conclude that John's baptism was one of the *divers* BAPTISMS before mentioned.*

It is plain the express *design* of it was to *prepare the way* of the Lord. For, as Moses was commissioned *to* SANCTIFY *the people,—i. e.*, to prepare them by a ceremonial purification in expectation of an approaching new economy, (Exod. xix. 10, 14,)—in like manner John was sent to the same honoured family, the house of Israel, not only to proclaim to them that *the kingdom of*

* I am not a little surprised at Dr Gill's remarks on John's baptism, (Body of Div., vol. iii., book iii., ch. i.,) where he attempts to prove that water-baptism is *peculiar* to the gospel dispensation. "This is opposed," says he, "to the sentiments of such who say baptism was in use before the times of *John*, of Christ and His apostles. There were indeed divers washings, bathings, or BAPTISMS, under the legal dispensation, for the purification of persons and things unclean, by the ceremonial law; which had a doctrine in them, called the *doctrine of baptisms*, which taught the cleansing of sin by *the blood of Christ*; but there was nothing similar in them to the ordinance of water-baptism, BUT IMMERSION ONLY!" How the Doctor takes for granted, without proof or apology, that the passage referred to (Heb. ix. 10) signifies *divers* IMMERSIONS—a passage his opponents have always pleaded as decisive *against* him! *Nothing similar to water-*BAPTISM *but* IMMERSION. That is, on his principle, which maintains that *βαπτισμὸς* is *immersion*, there was nothing in those *divers immersions* similar to the ordinance of *water-immersion*, but *immersion* only! To such ridiculous inconsistencies is that hypothesis reducible which makes the biblical use of the words baptism and immersion convertible and synonymous! He proceeds:—"John was the *first* administrator of the ordinance of baptism." This is flatly contradictory to the Doctor's concession immediately foregoing—"that there were divers *baptisms* under the legal dispensation," and consequently *baptizers*.

heaven—that is, a new and more excellent economy—was at hand, but also to second the important message by a general purification.*

But the question now returns, What was the constitution of the Jewish Church as to *infants?* The reply need be but short to so plain a case:—Infants shared in the *same rites* with their parents, even all those of which they were capable subjects, where not particularly distinguished and excepted. Not more sure is it that children oft, particularly *infant* children, were unavoidably subjected to ceremonial *pollutions* with their parents than they were entitled to the *same cleansings.* Therefore, whatever was the nature of John's cleansing rite, we may securely infer, parents and children partook of it in common.

(3.) When we consider, in connexion with these things, the general and *universal terms* made use of in the narration, we are rather confirmed than otherwise in favour of Pædobaptism, as practised by the venerable son of Zacharias. When we read of "all the people," "the multitude," "all that heard him," and the like, in reference to an ordinance in which infants and young children were capable of sharing as well as adults, by what equitable rule, I would fain know, are we authorised to set up an excluding barrier? If because *infants* and children are not *mentioned* particularly, by the same rule we must exclude *women* from the privilege of John's baptism. But if the *silence* of the inspired narrative is no sufficient reason for excluding the *latter*, neither is it for excluding the *former.* The very use of *general terms* is sufficient evidence (*cæt. par.*) for including all the species to which they are applicable.

§ 38. But here I am aware of an objection that may be thought unanswerable against the above reasoning—viz., "That those who were baptized by John *confessed their sins*, which infants could not do." To this irrefragable argument, falsely so called, we shall oppose the following answers:—

(1.) In all equitable and fair construction, nothing more can be inferred from such passages as speak of "Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan, being baptized of John in Jordan, *confessing their sins*," (Matt. iii. 5, 6,) than that *such* of them as were *actual* sinners made a *general* confession of their sins and iniquities; whereas, to serve the Antipædobaptist

* Vide Grotium in Matt. iii. 6.

cause, the narration should support a proof widely different—viz., that John baptized *no others* but those who made a *personal* confession of their sins. But this, which alone would be available to our opponents, the history of John's baptism I believe will *not* support.

What better clue can we fix upon towards investigating this point, than those Scripture passages which treat of national and general *confessions of sin?* Thus, for instance, the Lord himself says with respect to Israel, Lev. xxvi. 40–42, "If they shall *confess their iniquity,* and the iniquity of their fathers, with their trespass which they trespassed against me, and that also they have walked against me; . . . . if then their uncircumcised hearts be humbled, and they then accept of the punishment of their iniquity; then will I remember my covenant, ... and I will remember the land." Thus also Solomon, in his excellent prayer, on that memorable and eminently solemn occasion of introducing the ark of God into the newly-erected temple, 1 Kings viii. 47–53, "If they shall bethink themselves, ... and *repent,* and make supplication unto thee, ... saying, *We have sinned, and have done perversely, we have committed wickedness;* and so return unto thee with all their heart, and with all their soul, ... then hear thou their prayer and their supplication in heaven thy dwelling-place, and maintain their cause, ... and give them compassion before them who carried them captive, that they may have compassion on them; for they be thy people, and thine inheritance," &c. In like manner, on another solemn occasion, when a national reformation was attempted, and a general fast observed, it is said, Neh. ix. 2, "The seed of Israel separated themselves from all strangers, and stood and *confessed their sins,* and the iniquities of their fathers."

From these and similar passages we may observe—(1.) That the PEOPLE IN GENERAL, or *as a body,* are said to *confess their iniquity,* to *repent,* and to say, *We have sinned,* &c. (2.) That, notwithstanding, *infants* were *not capable* of these acts. But, (3.) Nevertheless, there was no privilege, national or ecclesiastical, which an infant was capable of enjoying, but was participated in by the child as well as the parent, as connected with, or consequent upon, such repentance and confession of sin. And, (4.) We may note the *general form* of confession: "We have sinned, and have done perversely; we have committed wickedness." How parallel this account is with the repentance and confession of "Jerusalem and

all Judea," let the impartial reader judge. Let him reflect, particularly, that repentance and confession of sin were the prescribed *conditions* in *both* cases, and the *benefits* suspended on these conditions were, in the one case, God's remembering His covenant and the land—maintaining their cause, and giving them compassion before their enemies; and, in the other, the *blessing* (not the *duty*) of the ecclesiastical purifying rite, and whatever external privileges were connected with it.

Again; it is not supposable that "Jerusalem and all Judea" were *deemed* by John *true penitents;* and the sequel of the history shews abundantly they were not *in fact. All*, who did not "reject the counsel of God against themselves," (Mark i. 5, Luke vii. 30,) were baptized of him; ALL the people but the *Pharisees* and *lawyers.* Therefore, seeing the repentance, humiliation, and confession were of the *general nature* above described, there is no sufficient reason assignable why the infants and children *should* not, or *did* not, share with their parents in the baptismal *benefit*, as the consequence of those conditions. It would be easy to make the same remarks on the humiliation of the Ninevites: when Jonah cried in the city, as John did in the wilderness, that destruction and wrath awaited the impenitent, the effect was pretty much alike; a *general humiliation* ensued, and we are sure that in the *one* instance, *infants* shared in the parent's consequent privilege; therefore, since that participation was not founded on a *positive grant*, but the *law of nature*, we are constrained to conclude, that the parent's privilege, in the *other* instance, extended to his infants, and dependent family, in virtue of the same uniform law. Besides—

(2.) When we consider how little notice is taken of children in the subsequent history of the Christian Church, particularly that part of it which treats of the progress and success of the gospel, and the evangelising of nations, as well as in the sacred records of the Old Testament,—where yet from circumstances we may gather with certainty the avowed church-membership and baptism of infants,—it is very conceivable how the New Testament should leave this point as we find it. The same remark is applicable to most reformations in the Church, and revolutions in civil society, while the membership and privileges of infants in these cases stand confessed in the estimation of their respective historians.

Considering, therefore, these things,—that the ordinance *in itself*

does not exclude infant subjects, but admits them not less than adults, as before proved; that the constitution, genius, and uniform custom of the Jewish Church (of which John and his disciples were members) included infants with their parents; that there appears in the brief account of John's ministry nothing *against* infants, but the *general* terms used are rather *in favour* of them; and that nothing can be gathered, in fairness and equity, of objectionable weight, from the account of the people *confessing their sins* as a conditional qualification for enjoying the baptismal privilege, for, on supposition that infants *were baptized,* no *other* language could be reasonably expected, as further appears from the Old Testament and the most approved ecclesiastical and civil records,—we conclude, that John was a PÆDOBAPTIST *de jure,* THEREFORE (*cæt. par.*) that we ought to regard him such *de facto.*

§ 39. We next appeal to Christ's public ministry. Our Lord and His servants, we are expressly told, made and baptized *more* disciples than John, though the latter baptized so great a number. How numerous, then, must they be! But were they *all* considered as *true believers,* or *real converts,* that is, justified and sanctified persons? Did our Lord, by His ministers, baptize the innumerable multitudes on *that supposition?* Nothing less. All that can in reason be thought of them is, that they made a general surrender of themselves as families and assembled crowds, after the manner of John's followers; and, indeed, their so general defection from Christ on occasion of His searching discourses, and His approaching death, renders the fact indubitable.

We may here again observe, that *the same reason* remains in force, in behalf of the privileges of children, in this period as before; as there is no ground of *repeal,* we think, either expressed or implied. But though we have nothing *against* them, we have something *in favour* of them. What I shall insist upon from this part of Scripture evidence shall be confined to two things: our Lord's confirming and decisive *sentence* concerning the *church-privileges* of infants; and the same thing *implied* in what He says of certain towns and cities as a general body, through the whole course of His ministry.

Let us begin with that passage, Matt. xix. 13–15; recorded also, with some variation, Mark x. 13–16, and Luke xviii. 15–17. Instead of transcribing these passages at length severally, as every reader may easily consult them, I shall give them in one connected

view from the *harmony* of the ingenious and candid Dr Doddridge:—"And they brought infants and young children to him, that he should touch them, or put his hands on them, and pray; and when his disciples saw it, they rebuked those that brought them. But when Jesus saw it, he was much displeased, and said unto them, Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of God. Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, he shall in no wise enter therein. And he called them unto him, and took them up in his arms, and put his hands upon them, and blessed them; and departed thence."* Jesus was now, it seems, at Bethabara, which was beyond Jordan, over against Jericho, where He tarried with His disciples some months. Hither great multitudes resorted to Him to receive His instructions, spiritual blessings, and miraculous cures. During His abode at Bethabara, previous to His going to Bethany, these things are recorded particularly: the doctrine of divorce and matrimony, in answer to the tempting Pharisees,—His doctrine concerning infants and children, occasioned by the importunity of their friends and the *harsh imprudence*, or the *inconsiderate officiousness* of the disciples,—the danger of riches, occasioned by the question of the young ruler,—bigotry and a party spirit, a very prevailing sin of the Jewish nation, reproved in the parable of the labourers. This, I believe, is all we have recorded belonging to this period, though of several months' continuance.

Now, let us attend to the circumstances and import of that passage relating to infants and young children, as above. On which I would offer the following reflections; which shall relate to the children's friends, the disciples, and our Lord's doctrine on the occasion:—

§ 40. (1.) The most probable motives of the children's parents or friends seem to be, that the fame of Jesus being abroad about His condescension to children and His peculiar fondness for them, as is manifest from Matt. xviii. 2, &c., they were anxious of receiving some token of His condescending notice and important benediction. In the instance just referred to, Jesus, while at Capernaum, had called a little child unto Him, and set him in the midst of His disciples, taking him up in His arms, and telling them, that they must become *like* little children,—that kindness

* Fam. Expos., vol. ii., § 136.

shewn to such was like shewing it to *Himself*. And, indeed, when we consider the propriety and amiableness of the thing itself, in connexion with the character of Jesus, we should think too contractedly to imagine that the few instances recorded by the evangelists were the *only* ones wherein He manifested a gracious regard for them. These considerations fully justified the *motives* of the persons in question, whether *they* or the *children* were baptized or not, by John or any of Christ's disciples heretofore, and without supposing them to have any design of offering themselves or theirs to be baptized at this time; and, indeed, this is the more improbable, in that, most likely, they had certain appointed opportunities for that purpose, whereas their express design, as here recorded, was to receive His *benediction*.

(2.) The next inquiry is, What could induce the disciples to *rebuke* these persons? I readily agree with Dr S., that it is not probable their conduct is chargeable with the guilt of DESPISING LITTLE CHILDREN *as such*, "having a far better opinion of those men of God, than to suppose them capable of an evil which very few of the most profligate among mankind are chargeable with;" but is rather imputable to "their *imprudence* and *inconsideration*, than to any inhumanity or cruelty in their tempers."* In fact, it seems to me pretty evident, that what gave *offence* to the disciples was what might appear to them an UNSEASONABLE *importunity*. Every one knows how much depends upon *well timing* an application to persons of much business of an important nature. This remark is sufficient to shew the inconclusiveness of Mr B.'s reasoning on this point:—"Is it not strange, unaccountably strange, that our Lord's most intimate friends should have been *offended* with the persons who brought those children, if it had then been customary to baptize infants?"† *Strange!* not at all; much less *unaccountably* strange. If there be any force in the reasoning, it is this:—If our Lord's attendants had been Pædobaptists, then no *ill-timed* application, no improper *manner* of applying, no *circumstance* whatever, could have been a cause of *offence* to them. I would exclaim in my turn, and with how much greater propriety let the reader judge, "Is it not strange, unaccountably strange," that my respectable opponent should be so inattentive to logical conclusiveness, as to rest an argument on such a foundation! Suppose an opulent and generous person, distributing libe-

* Answer to Dr A., p. 58. † Pædobaptism Examined, p. 349.

rally to proper objects, on convenient and seasonable opportunities, were addressed by the medium of servants or attendants *unseasonably;* and upon these giving the importunate solicitors of his charity a *short answer*, or perhaps a *reprimand*, it should be divulged—"The public is mistaken in regard to the character of the person, as if generous and charitable, and particularly his attendants, who are reported to be of the same disposition with himself; for else 'is it not strange, unaccountably strange,' that the person's most intimate friends should have been *offended* with those solicitors of their master's bounty, and should even have *rebuked* them, if it had been *customary* for him to relieve the distressed?" Any one acquainted with the world, and the nature of important business, might well say, Did you apply at a *convenient* time, and in a *prudent* manner? Equally futile is the inference, that Christ and His disciples were no Pædobaptists, else the latter could not have been *offended* with the persons who brought the children. Besides, Mr B. seems to forget or conceal the circumstance of our Lord's being *greatly displeased* with the disciples for their conduct; which He would not have been without any *ground* of blame. And I believe with Dr S., that His displeasure "was expressed with the greater warmth, in order the more deeply to impress the minds of spectators with the exceeding great tenderness He felt for little children. And I imagine it was chiefly with a view to mark this distinguishing feature of benevolence in our Lord's character, and to instruct us in the duty we owe to our children, that the evangelists have so particularly related this pleasing story."* While all attention, perhaps, to some heavenly doctrine, the disciples inadvertently thought He ought not to be interrupted by *children*, by *infants*, (βρέφη,) who are incapable of attending to and comprehending the Divine lecture.† But He soon convinces them of what they ought to have had always fresh in mind—"what exceeding great tenderness He felt for little children." But—

(3.) What was our Lord's doctrine on the occasion? "Suffer the little children to come unto me, *for* of such is the kingdom of

* Page 58.

† "Apostoli rem minus dignam Christo putabant, contingendis, pueris occupari."—*Poli Synops.* in loc. "Si impositum ejus capiti fuisset diadema, libenter nec sine plausu excepissent: quia proprium ejus munus nondum tenebant."—*Calvin in Matt.* xix. 14.

heaven." "Hunc clypeum Anabaptistis non *temere* opponimus."* This I venture to call a *decisive sentence* in favour of the *continued privilege* of the church-membership of infants under the gospel dispensation, and consequently their title to baptism; the evidence of which let us now investigate.

§ 41. From the passage under consideration we may learn—

(1.) "That these little children, being styled (*τὰ βρέφη*) *infants*, (Luke xviii. 15,) and taken up in Christ's arms, (Mark x. 16,) were children not yet come to the age of discretion; for *βρέφη*, according to Eustathius and Phavorinus, is *τὸ ἄρτι γεγονὸς παιδίον, καὶ τρεφομενος ἀπὸ τήθης—a new-born child, nourished from the teat.*"†

(2.) Whatever may be included in this blessing, "of such is the kingdom of heaven," we are not to suppose it *confined* to those children, much less to adults. "I cannot approve of rendering *τοιούτων*, 'such as resemble these.' It is the part of a faithful translator not to *limit* the sense of the *original*, nor to *fix* what it leaves ambiguous."‡ And Mr Henry observes, that "the word generally signifies not similitude, but *identity;* nor can any one instance be found where it excludes the person or thing mentioned."§ "Horum et similium: puerorum ut ætate, ita et moribus: non excludit pueros, a quibus facit initium, sed includit adultos eis similes; q. d., Pueri, a me jam benedicti, jam nunc idonei sunt regno cœlorum: vos adulti qui diu mea presentia et benedictione fruimini, nondum idonei estis, et, ut idonei fiatis, reddamini oportet illis similes quos contemnitis, a fastu alieni," &c.‖ "Hac voce tam parvulos quam eorum similes comprehendit. Insulse enim Anabaptistæ pueros excludunt, a quibus *initium* fieri debebat."¶ And Dr S. understands *τοιούτων*, "*of such little children*, LITTLE CHILDREN IN GENERAL;"** which I am by no means inclined to dispute.

Yet, afterwards he qualifies this universality thus:—"All little children WHO DIE IN THEIR INFANCY. And this," says he, "I take to be our Lord's meaning: 'of such'—of little children PASSING OUT OF LIFE IN THEIR INFANCY—'is the kingdom of heaven.' And considering what prodigious numbers, out of all kindreds, nations,

* Calvin in loc.
† Whitby in loc.
‡ Doddridge, Fam. Expos., vol. ii., § 136.
§ Treatise on Baptism, p. 104.
‖ Maldonat., ex Orig., Hieron., August., &c., et Luc. Brugen., ap. Poli Synops. in loc.
¶ Calvin in loc.
** Answer to Dr A., p. 61.

and tongues, are removed hence at that early period, heaven may very properly be said, a great part of it, to consist of them." Yet our author adds, "There is no way by which it can be credibly known which of them do possess such title to the kingdom of heaven, till they die." * Hence he concludes that because we cannot certainly or credibly know which of them shall *die* in their infancy, we are to regard NONE of them, while they live, as *subjects of the kingdom of heaven*, except we rest our judgment "upon a presumption of their dying."

But what says Mr B. on this head? "That it is *lawful* for a parent, or a *minister*, to GIVE UP INFANTS to God by solemn prayer, which is a moral duty, we readily allow; and that the conduct of Christ, on this occasion, manifested His regard for *little children*, is beyond a doubt; at the thought of which, we are so far from being pained, that we rejoice. Yes, it is a matter of joy; because, in our view, it wears a *smiling aspect* on the *final state* of such as *die* in their infancy, and that without any restriction in reference to *carnal descent*, which limitation has the appearance of a Jewish tenet." † Mr James Rutherford is still more explicit: —"As I cautioned my hearers, in like manner let me entreat my readers, not to entertain the *least suspicion* that my sentiments are harsh and uncharitable respecting the happy state of children who die in infancy; for though my conclusions so peremptorily exclude them from any part in the outward church-state, and deny their right to every ordinance thereof, yet I dare not affirm they are incapable of internal washing, or without a part in eternal glory. For although I have not met with *one word*, either in the Old or New Testament, from which the *final state* of those who die in infancy can be *inferred*, yet where the matter is so liable to *dispute* among men, and the Scriptures so *silent* about it, I always choose to take the *most charitable* side; on which account, I am inclined to *believe* the salvation of ALL who *die in infancy*." ‡ After all, according to Mr B., the conduct of Christ manifesting His condescending regard for little children, without baptizing

* Answer to Dr A., p. 64. † Pædobaptism Examined, p. 350.

‡ Thoughts on Believers' Baptism, p. 15. See, also, Gillard's "Probability of the Future Happiness of Infants, who Die in Infancy, Stated and Considered." The author, who is an Antipædobaptist, says of his design, "The idea pursued in this treatise is, the probability that ALL who die in a state of infancy are *elected*, and, therefore, certainly saved," (p. 9.)

them, makes nothing for infant baptism. "He who can fairly prove the point, or make any advances towards it, from such premises, must be a wonderful proficient in the art of syllogising."* On the contrary, we cannot help thinking, that "he who can interpret these words, 'Suffer little children,'" &c., to the denial of infants', *all* infants', church-membership, and consequent right to baptism, is no mean proficient in the art of evading evidence. However, let us examine this matter a little more closely.

These authors unanimously agree, that the phrase, "of such," includes "little children in general, without any restriction in reference to carnal descent." They also unite in supposing the salvation of "ALL such as *die in their infancy.*" Yet, if Mr Rutherford's opinion be admitted,—"that there is not *one word,* either in the Old or New Testament, from which the final state of those who die in infancy can be INFERRED,"—the above concessions (for so I may call them) come from Antipædobaptists with a very ill grace. However, though I cannot admit of Mr Rutherford's premises, I can easily fall in with the general conclusion, for reasons that need not here be produced. (See § 6.) But though our opponents be thus unanimous in allowing children, dying in their infancy, a place in the Church *above,* they are not less so in denying them a place in the Church *below;* for were they to grant them the *latter* privilege, their obligation to *baptize* them, as belonging to, or members of, the Church of Christ, could not be disputed. Here I would ask our opponents—

§ 42. Can they coolly and impartially believe, that those very children whom Christ *actually blessed,* to the joy of their parents, and the instruction of His ministering servants, were NOT *members* of the gospel Church, in the same sense as their parents or any other disciples were, at least AFTER this benediction?†

As Jews, they were members of the Church of God as well as

* Pædobaptism Examined, p. 351.

† "Certe non lusorium nec inane symbolum erat manuum impositio, nec frustra preces in aerem Christus effudit; solenniter autem offerre Deo non potuit quin puritate donaret. Quid vero illis precatus est, nisi ut reciperentur *inter Dei filios?* Unde sequitur regenitos Spiritu fuisse in spem salutis. Ipse denique amplexus testis fuit censeri ipsos a Christo in *suo grege.* Quod si donorum spiritualium quæ figurat baptismus, compotes fuerunt, *externo signo* privari absurdum est. Sacrilega vero audacia est, abigere procul ab *ovili Christi* quos ipse in *sinu suo* fovet, et quasi extraneos clausa janua rejicere quos prohiberi non vult."—*Calvin in Matt.* xix. 14.

their parents. But when a Jew believed Jesus to be the Messiah, and professed attachment to Him, was he required to *renounce* his former religion, in like manner as a heathen was required to renounce his? Or, was there anything whatever required of a Jew but to *believe* what Christ *taught*, and to *observe* what He *commanded?* But believing what He taught, and observing what He commanded, no way interfered with the continued and uninterrupted church-membership of his children. Nay, his *own* church-membership was not *changed*, but *improved* by confessing Christ. Therefore, for such a parent to treat his children as *dispossessed* of their church-membership when he himself was not, and without any pretence of necessity from anything which Christ taught or commanded, must be evidently unjustifiable. Consequently, in proportion as these parents judged and acted agreeably to *truth*, they must have conducted themselves towards their children as *actual members* of the Church of God.

But since it appears that not only the less instructed among the Jews, but our Lord's disciples who constantly attended Him, formed very wrong conceptions of the nature of the Messiah's kingdom, which they called "the kingdom of heaven," (see Matt. xviii. 1–4,) what can be more natural than to consider our Lord's declaration in the text as a direct answer to such a mistake? Why should we not, therefore, interpret "the kingdom of heaven" of the Messiah's kingdom? In the last-mentioned text, the disciples, labouring under this common prejudice, inquire of their Lord, "Who should be greatest in *the kingdom of heaven?*" His answer to their question was, by an action similar to that we are considering: and (except we suppose the answer *foreign* to the question) in the *former* instance, the requisition for membership in the gospel Church, or for subjects in the Messiah's kingdom, was, *conformity* to a little child, which He proposed to them as a model; in the *latter*, He seems to cut off all occasion of the absurdity of *confining* His doctrine to the case of adults whose excellency consisted in likeness to infants, to the exclusion of infants themselves. Therefore, the *kingdom of heaven—i.e.*, the *gospel Church*—is made up, as to the true character of its subjects, not only of those who are *like* little children, but of little children *themselves*. "Not only such adults as *resemble* these, but *these*, and *such as these*, in the strictest sense, belong to my kingdom now about to be established."

To this Dr S. objects :—"That He means the *world of glory*, and not His kingdom on earth, appears plain to me from the words immediately following, as reported by Luke : 'Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, shall in no wise enter therein ;' that is, Whosoever shall not receive the gospel with the simplicity and teachableness [*teachableness !* *] of a little child, he shall in no wise enter into the world of glory ; not, surely, he shall in no wise enter into the visible Church, for into that some of the vilest hypocrites have entered." † If this be a just account of the *prerequisites* for glory, what becomes of infants who do not receive the gospel at all? Our respectable author seems to forget that simplicity and teachableness are not *universally necessary* for entrance into the kingdom of glory, which he must allow in granting the salvation of dying infants. Passing by this, let us attend to his main argument :—"Not the visible Church, for into that some of the vilest hypocrites have entered." But if this proves anything, I fear it will prove too much. On other occasions we are told, "He that forsaketh not all to follow Christ, and hateth not father and mother, &c., for His sake, cannot be *His disciple, i.e.*, cannot be a *subject of His kingdom.*" But who sees not that in such passages we are to understand the term *disciple*, not as implying mere *profession*, but the *possession* also of what is professed? In like manner, *entering into the kingdom of heaven*, or the Church of Christ, is twofold : either into the *number* of subjects *externally*, or into the real *spiritual happiness* it exhibits. And in this view, the impartial Dr Doddridge paraphrases the passage in question, Mark x. 15, and Luke xviii. 17 : "*Whosoever shall not* be willing to *receive the kingdom of God*, or the GOSPEL DISPENSATION and the HAPPINESS IT PROMISES, *as a little child*, —divesting himself of those prejudices, and those secular views which men contract in their riper years,—*he shall not in any wise*, or on any terms, *enter into it*, be his genius ever so sublime, or his circumstances in life ever so considerable." ‡ This I believe is a plain, natural, and consistent interpretation of the text ; and avoids *five* great inconveniences with which the other appears clogged.

* "When Mr —— makes their *docibleness* the thing intended by Christ, he forgot that he judged them uncapable of being *disciples*. Why may not those be *disciples*, who are not only *docible*, but *exemplary* for their teachableness?"—*Baxter's Plain Script. Proof*, p. 105.

† Answer to Dr A., p 65.

‡ Family Expos., vol. ii., § 136.

(1.) The confined sense of the words for which our opponents contend, referring them exclusively to the *world of glory*, labours under this inconvenience—viz., that then they are *not so direct* and full an answer to the reigning prejudice of the persons addressed, particularly the disciples, whose wrong views of the Messiah's kingdom are here, it seems, intentionally rectified. (See Matt. xviii. 1–4.)

(2.) It labours under another disadvantage: viz., it virtually renounces that well-known scriptural distinction of a *twofold* entering into the kingdom of Christ—into its *external privileges*, and its *internal blessings;* as if these words, "Whosoever shall not receive the kingdom of God as a little child, shall in no wise enter therein," must *needs* refer either to a mere external relation to Christ and His people, or to heavenly glory. Whereas it is equally true, that the worldly-minded miser, or the self-righteous Pharisee, cannot enter into the *happiness* of the gospel dispensation, as that they cannot enter into *glory*.

(3.) It seems to deny, that the *state of grace* as well as the *state of glory*, may be called the *kingdom of heaven*. Nothing is more evident, or more universally acknowledged, than that the gospel dispensation, in its external aspect, is so called. Nor is it much less evident, that the *spiritual economy* of the gospel is so denominated in the following places:—Matt. iii. 2, iv. 17, x. 7, xii. 28, xvi. 28, &c.*

(4.) It excludes these very infants from *present* interest in the blessing pronounced concerning them. Is it supposable that they have no real privilege either confirmed or conferred? Was our Lord's laying His hands on them, and reproving His disciples for their sakes, expressive of no favour towards them, but a mere empty sign? But if this wonderful condescension and loving regard to them was attended with any benefit to them, are we at liberty to fix on any which fancy dictates, to the exclusion of what the words plainly express? "Of such *is* the kingdom of heaven." The benefit here pronounced on them (if at all here included, which cannot reasonably be denied, as before shewn) was a *present* benefit, whether now conferred or only asserted and confirmed. And to deny this, will be attended with another inconvenience, viz.—

(5.) If they were at all included, it must either make the plain-

* For a large collection of such passages, see Whitby on Matt. iii. 2.

est language of the time present refer to time *future*, or convert the declaration, "of such is the kingdom of heaven," into a *prophecy* concerning their eternal state; both which will be thought sufficiently improbable; and the more so, when we reflect that there is not the least necessity of running into such extremes. I would again inquire—

§ 43. Have we any ground to suppose, that our Lord would have denied the privilege here expressed to any *other* infants or little children, had they been brought to Him? Was not His declaration, "of such," abundantly encouraging on behalf of *any such* that should be brought to Him? Or must we interpret what is expressed in terms so general, as exclusive of *all the infants and little children* in the world? Strange interpretation! For, then, what encouragement or even propriety can there be in the preceding gracious declaration, "Suffer them to come unto me, and forbid them not?" How could this be *founded* on the general doctrine, "of such is the kingdom of heaven?" Or must we say, in compliance with our opponents' interpretation, "Such as DIE in their infancy go to glory; THEREFORE, let these which are ALIVE, and SUCH as these, be brought unto me!"

Again; seeing what was done to these children was not of a miraculous nature, have we any authority to assert that parents *in the present day* are debarred from every privilege tantamount to this with respect to their children? Yet, on Antipædobaptist principles, which deny their church-membership and baptism, this is the case! For, according to them, we cannot conclude that "theirs *is* the kingdom of heaven," but on supposition of their *dying*. But our Lord's gracious mandate, "Suffer them," &c., was not *that they may* partake of the kingdom of heaven, but *because* of these, and such as these, *is* the kingdom of heaven.

Moreover; how can parents bring their children to Christ, in the Antipædobaptist sense of bringing them, *because* theirs *is* the kingdom of heaven? Or were it further granted, that our Lord meant heaven above was in a great measure peopled with such infants, *therefore* these were welcome; will it not still follow, that *ours* are welcome in the same sense and for the same reason? And if *bringing them to Him* be followed with no church-privilege, if no possible disposition or conduct of a parent be attended with present advantage; and if the children of heathens (as my opponents hold) be equally admitted to heaven with those of believers, dying

in their infancy; what possible advantage can there be to our offspring, or encouragement to ourselves, from *these words* of our Lord?

Once more; if parents or ministers may now lawfully, in the language of Mr B., "GIVE UP INFANTS TO GOD by solemn prayer," *because* there *are* infants in glory, it still follows that we may lawfully *give up infants to the Church* of God, because there are such in glory. For to hold that they may be *given up* to God with the view of their obtaining the *grace* of the covenant, and yet debarred from the *means* of the covenant, without any personal forfeiture, is absurd. Nor can it be maintained, with any show of reason, that our Lord's words, "Suffer them to come, and forbid them not," are the same in meaning as, "Do not hinder parents to *pray* for their children;" for *this*, neither the disciples nor any other person, who would permit a *parent* to pray at all, would once think to *forbid*.

But supposing, for argument's sake, so unnatural and forced an interpretation were allowed, which grounds the reproof of the disciples, and the encouragement of parents to bring *living* infants to Him, on the happiness of the *dying*, and of *theirs* if they die while infants,—still, I say, if I am not greatly mistaken, we ought to regard infants as parts of the *visible Church*. For, if Mr Towgood's calculation be just,—viz., "that from the exactest observations, it appears that, of those who are born into the world, scarce a *third part* attain to the age of *one year*;" * nay, upon a more moderate calculation, if, instead of a "third part," we say *one half* attain to the age of *two years*,—there is not a new-born infant in the world, our opponents being judges, but of that it may be said, it *more probably* is an heir of glory than of woe. And, though the matter were not quite so clear, Mr Rutherford candidly observes, we "should always choose the *most charitable* side." Hence it follows, that though none were to be visibly brought to Christ, or admitted to church-membership, but those whom we charitably judge to be heirs of glory, we ought, on the concessions of our opponents, to treat our new-born infants as those who are visibly related to Christ, or church-members; for a *probable* visible relation to the kingdom of glory includes a *certain* visible relation to the Church militant. If we have any charitable probable ground of judging, "the kingdom of heaven

* Baptism of Inf. Reason. Serv., p. 1.

belongs to such, *much more* a standing as members in the visible Church; for what is it to be a member of the Church visible but to be one that in seeming, or appearance, or to the judgment of man, doth belong to the invisible Church, or the kingdom of heaven? For the Church is but one, and the difference respective: therefore, both visible and invisible, both military and triumphant, are called in Scripture, the kingdom of heaven, or of God. If a man be [but probably] *known*, or any sort of men, to belong to the Church invisible, then they *visibly* belong to it; and then they are visible members of the Church. So that this proof [founded on our opponents' concessions *] is more full for infants' church-membership, than if it had been said, They may be visible church-members; for it saith much more of them, which *includeth* that." †

Besides; have our antagonists anything more than *probability* to influence their determinations with respect to adults? *Infallibility*, we know, they disclaim, and a *medium* between both will not be pretended. Now if a visible probability of relation to the kingdom of glory be, according to our Lord, a reason of a visible access to Him; and if He says, "Of such" (understanding thereby, with our opposers, the *species* of infants dying in their infancy) "is the kingdom of heaven," or heavenly glory; it follows, that we have a *stronger reason* for concluding that any child whatever belongs to the visible Church, than any can have respecting any adult. In the latter we *may* be deceived, in the former we *cannot*. The premises duly weighed, we dare not hesitate to conclude, that the balance evidently turns in favour of Pædobaptism.

Should any object, that to acknowledge the church-membership of infants would not amount to a concession to justify Pædobaptism; I answer, If baptism be the only regular way and manner of solemn admission into the gospel Church, (as the learned Mr Tombes allows,‡ and, if I mistake not, the generality of Antipædobaptists,) it will be time enough to prove the certain *connexion* between church-membership and baptism, when our opponents enter their protest against it.

Before I dismiss this branch of our subject, the length of which has been occasioned by the subtle evasions of our adversaries, I would present the reader with the following words of Mr Richard Baxter:—"Doth Christ take them [infants] in His *arms*, and would

* See § 41. † See Baxter's Plain Script. Proof, p. 105.

‡ Apology, p. 54. See Baxter's Plain Script. Proof, p. 24.

He have them *all* put out of His *visible Church?* Would He have us receive them *in His name*, and yet not receive them into His Church, nor as His disciples? How *can* infants be received in Christ's name, if they belong not visibly to Him and His Church? Nay, doth Christ account it a receiving of Himself, and shall I then refuse to receive them, or acknowledge them, the subjects of His visible kingdom? For my part, seeing Christ hath given me so full a discovery of His will in this point, I will boldly adventure to follow His rule, and had rather answer Him, upon His own encouragement, for ADMITTING A HUNDRED INFANTS into His Church, than answer for KEEPING OUT OF ONE."* "I desire any tender-conscienced Christian, that is in doubt whether infants should be admitted members of the visible Church, and would fain know what is the pleasure of Christ in this thing, to bethink himself, whether it be more likely that it will *please Christ better* to bring, or solemnly admit, infants into the Church, or to shut them out? And whether *these words* of Christ, so plain and earnest, will not be a *better plea* at judgment for our admitting infants, than any that ever they [Antipædobaptists] brought, will be to them for refusing them?"† "I bless the Lord Jesus, the King of the Church, for having so great a tenderness to the infants themselves, and so great a care of the information of His Church concerning His will, as to speak it thus *plainly*, that plain-meaning men may well see His mind; even as if He had therefore done this because He foresaw that in these latter days some would arise that would *renew the disciples' mistake* in this point."‡

§ 44. Having, as proposed, (§ 39,) considered our Lord's confirming and decisive *sentence* concerning the church-privileges of infants, we proceed to consider more briefly the same thing *implied* in what He says of Israel and certain towns and cities, through the whole course of His ministry.

(1.) It is well known that the mission and ministry of Christ were primarily intended for the use of the Jews, (Matt. xv. 24;) with which coincides His commission to the seventy, (Matt. x. 6.) Now, if our Lord by His ministry addressed *Israel* as a *body of people*, even as they were wont to be addressed by the former prophets; and the same was given in commission to the seventy disciples,

* Plain Script. Proof. p. 103. † Ibid., p. 106.

‡ Ibid., p. 107. See, also, Dr Doddridge's excellent improvement of the sacred story, Fam. Expos., § 136.

that they should "*go to the lost sheep of the house of Israel,*" preaching, and saying, "The kingdom of heaven is at hand;" it follows that their *national conversion* was proposed, and but for their unbelief and general rejection of the Messiah, would have been effected. Therefore, it was economically and ministerially *intended* that the Jewish *infants* should be among the converted, or subjects of the Messiah's kingdom. Consequently, it would be absurd to suppose that those who *did receive* Him were not favoured in regard to their children, as they would have been on the general conversion of their countrymen, except obliged thereto by a revealed fact. But no such revealed fact exists. Hence we conclude, that the infants and dependents of converted Jews were *de jure* members of the gospel Church, and, for aught appears to the contrary, *de facto* likewise.

(2.) The same thing is implied in our Lord's instructions to His disciples, (Luke x. 5–15.) They were instructed to direct their message to *families* and *cities;* the family was blessed, proselyted, or *discipled,* if the *son of peace* was there; and in proportion as a *city* gave reception to them and their message, it was *discipled* in like manner. But if they and their message were despised and rejected, an awful curse was denounced. The threatened woe was levelled against the inhabitants of a place *collectively,* in which the parents and children shared alike, at least externally; which implies that the contrary blessings would have been shared in common, on supposition of the parents receiving the gospel. Now it appears that what was required of these families and cities for the continuance and extension of their religious privileges, was their *not rejecting* the gospel message; but personally to *repent* and *believe* in such a sense as is peculiar to the regenerate, cannot be supposed to be that, and that alone, which entitled whole *families* and *cities* to discipleship and gospel privileges.

(3.) What our Lord says in His lamentation over Jerusalem, (Luke xiii. 34, 35, xix. 41–44, Matt. xxiii. 37, 38,) implies, that, had it not been for its ingratitude and unbelief, in that *general* sense before mentioned, its religious privileges would have been continued, confirmed, and enlarged, as well as its temporal calamities averted. "How often," says the compassionate Saviour, "would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen doth gather her brood under her wings, and ye would not!" Again,

"He beheld the city, and wept over it, saying, If thou hadst" (or, Oh that thou hadst!) "known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong unto thy peace! but now they are hid from thine eyes; . . . . *because* thou knewest not the time of thy visitation." Is it not here *implied* that the genuine tendency and express design of our Lord's ministry complied with, would have prevented their awful doom? But what was that doom? Did it not include a dissolution, not merely of their civil polity, but of their *religious privileges* also? And did not these include the *church-membership* of their infant children, which we have seen was by no means *peculiar* to the Mosaic dispensation, and, therefore, would not have been abrogated with the Mosaic ritual?

(4.) The same conclusion is evidently inferable from Matt. xi. 20–24, where our Lord *upbraids* the cities wherein most of His mighty works were done, because they *repented* not; and the kind of repentance that would have been available, for the purpose of admission into the gospel dispensation, is mentioned ver. 21, "a repenting in sackcloth and ashes;" in the same manner as Nineveh, (compare Matt. xii. 41.) From whence, and from the foregoing passages, we infer, that the whole tendency and express design of our Lord's ministry, and that of His disciples, *implied* that the church-membership and religious privileges of parents were to be extended to their children under the gospel. Consequently, the Antipædobaptist plan of evangelising and discipling the *nations*, which admits none to the Christian Church, in its more universal form, *but* on personal profession of what is deemed saving faith and repentance, differs essentially from that of Christ through the whole course of His ministry. Should it be said, that we ought to distinguish beween the averting of judgment from a people, and their partaking of religious privileges and rites; I answer, it is true these are *distinguishable*, but it is equally true, that no such distinction can be of any real service to the Antipædobaptist cause. For, being *Jewish* towns and cities, families and people, the *mode* of their conversion is to be sought from their *own* history, and the former revolutions that *had before* obtained in the Church of God; except a different manner be *expressly* specified. Whatever hypothesis is erected in defiance of this fundamental rule, must be necessarily a *baseless* fabric. Or, we may as soon contrive an even balance possessed of the wonderful

property of outweighing *something* with *nothing*, as to contrive a rule for excluding infants from the Church of the New Testament, without an *express* injunction for so doing!

§ 45. In confirmation of our general argument, that it is the WILL OF CHRIST infants should partake of all their parents' privileges, and consequently that of baptism, we next appeal to that capital text, Matt. xxviii. 19, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them," and so on.* "The whole tenor of the succeeding books of the New Testament shews that Christ designed by this commission that the gospel should be preached to *all nations* without exception, not only to the Jews, but to all the idolatrous Gentiles; but the *prejudices* of the apostles led them at first to *mistake the sense*, and to imagine that it referred only to their going to preach the gospel to the Jews among all nations, or to those who should be willing to become Jews."† It is, I believe, generally agreed, that by *all nations* (*πάντα τὰ ἔθνη*) is intended the Gentile world at large, together with the Jewish nation. They were no longer to *confine* their labours among the lost sheep of Israel. The middle wall of partition being taken down, their commission is unlimited. The whole habitable globe is their diocese, in which they were to employ their extraordinary talents and seraphic zeal, without any official superiority.

In our inquiry into the *controverted* part of this important passage, it will be necessary to premise what is properly the point contended for from these words. And this is the rather necessary, on account of the following remarkable declaration:—"Could it be proved that *μαθητεύσατε* sometimes conveys the idea of making

* Mr Booth says, this "is not a mere *allusion* to baptism, nor an *incidental* use of the term, but it is *the institution* of that ordinance." But what *proof* does he offer in support of this assertion? Why, "it is the first appointment of baptism for the use of the *Gentiles*;" and "Jesus Christ, on this occasion, expressly claims *all authority in heaven and on earth*."—*Pædobaptism Examined*, p. 322. But how can the fact of its being now first appointed *for the use of the Gentiles*, disprove its being before appointed *for the use of the Jews?* With as great propriety may it be inferred, that because in this commission we have the first appointment of *preaching the gospel* to the *Gentiles*, therefore the gospel was not preached before to the Jews! Did not the disciples baptize *before* this period? And was not that done *by commission* from Christ? Had He not *authority*, Divine authority, to commission? Or was it now His kingly office commenced? "*He plainly appears as King of Zion and Sovereign of the world.*" But will Mr B. say that He was not so *prior* to this period? If not, how does this shew that baptism was not before instituted?

† Doddridge's Fam. Expos. in loc., *note*.

disciples, where there is *no teaching;* and that βαπτίζοντες is occasionally used for pouring or sprinkling, where there is *no immersion;* yet the dispute between us and our brethren would not be decided, because this question would still remain for discussion: Is making a disciple *without instruction,* in the one case, and *pouring* or *sprinkling,* in the other, the NATURAL and PRIMARY signification of these Greek words?"* In settling this point, if we wish not to confound, it will be necessary to distinguish. *Still the dispute would not be decided, because of the* NATURAL and PRIMARY *signification.* Here let the following things be considered:—

(1.) There is an important difference between a *primary* PHILOLOGICAL or ETYMOLOGICAL, and a *primary* LEGAL sense of terms, founded on this ground—that terms acquire different acceptations according to the positions in which they stand. There is hardly any law, sacred or civil, but may furnish a confirmation of this necessary distinction.†

(2.) It follows, that a term, in its primary *legal* sense, *may* have one acceptation, while in its primary *philological* sense it occupies another. And this, we contend, is the case here, even on supposition that μαθητεύω (referring the *other* term to its proper place) signifies, in its primary *philological* meaning, and in certain positions, what Mr B. contends for.

(3.) Nothing is capable of fixing the exact *legislative force* of a word or phrase, but a careful and impartial attention to circumstances; and these refer either to the sovereign or the subject. For, if we overlook relations, time, place, customs, laws already in force, and the like, what success can be expected in ascertaining the sense?

(4.) That must needs be the most *natural* signification, which results from a due weighing of all circumstances. Should not the force and comparative influence of terms be sought in connexion

* Pædobaptism Examined, p. 322.

† "It must be observed, that in translating, we are not to render *word* for *word,* but *sense* for *sense,* and that the most *literal versions* are not always the most *faithful.* There is a great deal of difference between the *letter* and the *literal sense.* The *letter* is the *word* explained according to its *etymology.* The *literal sense* is the *meaning* of the author, which is frequently quite different from the *grammatical* signification of the words."—*Beausobre and L'Enfant's Introduction to the Reading of the Holy Scriptures, ap. Bishop Watson's Collection of Theological Tracts,* vol. iii., p. 103.

with the constitution and genius, and especially the former statutes of any state? And is not this rule equally applicable to that kingdom which is not of this world?

These things considered, then, may we not justly expostulate, How was it possible for the disciples—who were native Jews, and brought up in the bosom of the Jewish Church, receiving instructions from the Messiah, who was alike circumcised—to understand the terms employed in this text in any other sense than that which includes infants with their parents? Would they understand their commission in a sense to which they never had been accustomed? take words *capable* of *two* constructions in that sense which excluded infants from their parents' privileges? a sense, I will add, they never heard of; nay, that NEVER HAD BEEN HEARD OF SINCE THE WORLD BEGAN? Or, had they been previously versed in our opponents' notions about positive rites? These we have seen, and seen, I think, demonstrated, to be inconsistent with truth; and therefore, may boldly affirm, they were governed by no such maxims. Moreover, could they so easily forget, in the interpretation and execution of their commission, their Lord's repeated declarations, that "of infants was the kingdom of heaven?" Could they forget His being *greatly displeased* with them for their not paying infants that attention which was their due, and to which culpable neglect their ambitious and erroneous views of the gospel kingdom had betrayed them? Had they not just reason ever after to fear adopting any sentiment or practice which would exclude infants from a visible access to their Divine Friend and Saviour; by whom their privileges, as visible church-members, had been so expressly asserted and confirmed? (See §§ 39–43.)

"Are these the senses of those terms," says Mr B., "that would naturally *first* occur to the mind of a wise and impartial person on reading or hearing this law of baptism?" And again, "Each of these emphatical words, making a capital figure in the heavenly edict, should be understood in its *most plain*, and *common*, and *expressive signification;* for, as to any *absurdity* following upon it, our opponents pretend none, but what implies a begging of the question." * We answer, that in connexion with all those circumstances of legal interpretation which *ought* to be taken into the account, the sense which includes infants with their parents in this phrase—*μαθητεύσατε πάντα τὰ ἔθνη, βαπτίζοντες αὐτοὺς*—is

* Pædobaptism Examined, p. 322.

not only the *first* that would occur to the mind of the disciples, but we maintain that there is the "highest evidence" the Legislator did *intend* that sense. Nay, further, we insist that it is "highly absurd" to interpret them otherwise than what we contend for, and that without "begging of the question disputed." For, is it to "beg the question," to take into the account the circumstances of legislation? And were not the disciples always accustomed, as Jews, and as the disciples of Jesus, to reckon infants as members of the Church with their parents, in every preceding dispensation? Besides; on supposition that our Lord intended, in so many words, to establish our sense of the text, how could it be more properly expressed, or more effectually established? And though designed for all ages and nations, that does not hinder their being adapted to the circumstances of the persons first addressed. Upon the most equitable ground, therefore, it would be *absurd* to suppose the disciples understood them of adults *only*. This being the case, nothing can be admissible in evidence against Pædobaptist principles, from this or any other text, which does not reject and excommunicate infants in the most express and unequivocal manner. I say *excommunicate;* for can it be anything short of this, when the whole *species* of infants is *cut off* from the Church militant at one blow? Before we accede to such a step, is it not proper to pause, to pause again, and to inquire with holy alarm, On what ground are *they* excluded from the Church on earth, who are confessedly admitted to glory, dying in their infant state? The Jews were *cut off* for *unbelief;* but this is no adequate cause in the case of infants born in the city of God. Is the species of infants *more wicked* now than before and after the deluge, that they should be debarred from their parents' privileges? Where is the broad seal of heaven to ratify that absolute authority which puts an end to all strife? I must ingenuously confess, that, with all the *light* Mr B. has thrown upon the point, I can discover no such authority. But I see, or think I see, every part of the Divine dispensations, and the whole of the sacred oracles, perfectly consistent with Pædobaptism, and delivering a verdict not a little favourable to it.

§ 46. But Mr B.'s most formidable objection, and that on which he seems to lay the principal stress, is still behind. Its figure is that of a horned dilemma:—"If this law of the Lord have any regard to instruction as a prerequisite for baptism, that instruc-

tion must be required either of *all* or only of *some*. To affirm the *latter*, there is not the least ground in this Divine canon, because it makes no distinction between what is required of some, and what is demanded of others. It remains, then, that *all* must be taught, that *all* must become disciples, before they are baptized."* This does not appear to me consequential and solid, though subtle. I would, therefore, propose what to my apprehension seems to be the precise meaning of our Lord in the text—viz., That gospel ministers should *proselyte, disciple* or *teach*, and *baptize* ALL PROPER SUBJECTS in all nations, introducing them thereby into the gospel kingdom, and exercising their commission discretionally, *pro captu singulorum et instantium rerum*. And not only do I think this to be the genuine intent of the commission, but apprehend that, by fair criticism and argument, it is *impossible* to settle the meaning of the text by any other interpretation.† For, if it be said that *πάντα τὰ ἔθνη* must be taken *strictly*, and without any such qualification,—if *μαθητεύσατε* be understood in that sense of proselyting which may be done *without instruction*, absolutely and unconditionally,—if we say that *all who are taught* may be baptized without distinction,—they all lie equally exposed to exception, uncertainty, and error.

But here it is observable, that what Mr B. cites as *concessions* from Hoornbeckius, Ridgley, Calvin, Poole, Beckmanus, Barrow, Mastricht, Burnet, Whitby, Venema, &c., who were professed Pædobaptists, should be understood in the sense just proposed; and what those passages fairly imply is, that it would be an abuse of the term *μαθητεύσατε* to plead from it the mode of discipling which the Church of Rome has sometimes adopted to the disgrace of the Christian religion. It is extremely improbable, nay, highly

* Pædobaptism Examined, p. 325.

† "It seems to me," says the judicious Dr Guyse, "that *μαθητεύσατε πάντα τὰ ἔθνη, disciple all nations*, relates to the WHOLE DESIGN of Christ's commission for making disciples to Him; and that *βαπτίζοντες*, and *διδάσκοντες αὐτούς*, *baptizing* and *teaching them*, are mentioned as PARTICULAR BRANCHES of that general design, the order of which was to be determined by the *circumstances of things*. And *these*, indeed, made it necessary that, in discipling ADULT *Jews* and *heathens*, they should be taught *before* they were baptized; but *other* circumstances, in the settled state of the gospel kingdom, make it *as necessary*, that, in discipling the children of believers, [*i.e.*, of Christians,] they should be *first baptized*, and *afterwards taught*, as the CHILDREN of Jews, and of proselytes to their religion, were *first circumcised*, and when they grew up were instructed in the faith of the God of *Israel*."—*Note* in loc.

uncharitable, to suppose that these eminent characters should be capable of so glaring a contradiction as to hold any sense of the word *μαθητεύω* incompatible with infant discipleship and baptism. However that be, my business is not to vindicate characters, but to investigate truth. In fact, the text is capable of abuse in two opposite extremes: the one strains them [*i.e.*, its terms] into a sense *too general;* the other into a sense *too particular*, or unreasonably contracted. But if repentance and faith be required ONLY of adults as conditions, *sine qua non*, of *salvation*, for the very same reason teaching is required ONLY of adults as a condition, *sine qua non*, of *baptism*. Here the hackneyed distinction between the different kinds of evidence required in moral duties and positive rites is useless; for is it not an act equally sovereign to prescribe the conditions of salvation and the qualifications for baptism? And is not the *former* as much included in Mr B.'s definition of positive absolute authority as the *latter* can be? Besides, are not these qualifications for salvation and baptism respectively delivered in the *same commission?* It follows, therefore, inevitably, that if this commission (see Mark xvi. 15, 16) excludes infants from baptism, it must on the same principle exclude them from salvation and glory, contrary to our opponents' declarations. Nor will it ever be in their power—I scruple not to affirm it—to prove the greater probability of dying infants' salvation than their perdition, without at the same time furnishing us with premises from which we may fairly conclude they may be baptized while living; for if it be said that their *salvation* may be gathered from *other* considerations, so may the duty of parents and ministers to baptize them. But this, I hope, has been sufficiently established before.

"Here one can hardly forbear to remark," says Mr B., "in what *opposite* ways this capital text is interpreted, to make it agree with different hypotheses."* True; and we claim the liberty, in turn, to class his interpretation among those which are so *different* and *opposite*. Or, can he suppose that *his* hypothesis must needs pass for true, because he finds a disagreement among other authors? Were this mode of arguing admitted, with what ease might the Quakers confute the Pædobaptists and Antipædobaptists alike, the Papists our Protestant principles, and Deists our common Christianity!

* Page 330.

§ 47. It would be easy to produce a long list of eminent authors ancient and modern, who render the word *μαθητεύειν* by, TO PROSELYTE, TO DISCIPLE, or TO MAKE DISCIPLES, as well as by *to teach*. Let the few following suffice. Thus Leigh, in his "Critica Sacra:" —"*Μαθητεύσατε*, 'Go and teach all nations;' or word for word from the Greek, 'GO MAKE THEM DISCIPLES,' as it is expounded, John iv. 1." Bullinger:—"DISCIPULATE, sive, facite mihi discipulos." * Dutch Annotators:—"Instruct all the nations, or MAKE DISCIPLES among all nations, as the word is also taken, Acts xiv. 21; Mark xvi. 15." Poole's Continuators:—"The Greek is, *μαθητεύσατε*, MAKE DISCIPLES all nations." Doddridge:—"Go forth therefore, and PROSELYTE all the nations of the earth." † Turretine:—"Vox *μαθητεύειν*, qua Christus utitur, proprie non tam est docere per predicationem quam DISCIPULOS FACERE, quod fit etiam administratione baptismi, qui est sacramentum initiationis, et primus in ecclesiam et familiam Christi introitus." ‡ Stockius: —"*Μαθητεύω*, FACIO DISCIPULUM. Proprie discipulatum innuit, et *transitive*, notans, DISCIPULUM FACERE." § Beza:—"*Μαθητεύειν*, hic non neutropassive pro *discipulum esse*, sed *active* accipitur; *q.d.* DISCIPULATE." Gataker:—"Discipulos facite." Lightfoot:—"Introducite per baptismum, ut doceantur. Errant qui hinc colligunt, necessario docendos qui baptizandi sunt. Dixit ethnicus ad Hilelem, *proselytum me fac, ut me doceas.*" ‖ Hammond:—"Matt. xxviii. 19. The phrase which is there used in the original is a singular one, not duly expressed by our English 'teach.' It is *μαθητεύσατε*, MAKE DISCIPLES, or receive into discipleship, all nations, baptizing them in the name, &c., making this form of baptism their ceremony of receiving them. John iv. 1, *μαθητὰς ποιεῖ καὶ βαπτίζει*, is all one with *μαθητεύσατε βαπτίζοντες*. *Διδάσκοντες*, 'teaching,' follows after *βαπτίζοντες*, 'baptizing:' all that are thus brought and received *ad discipulatum*, to be for the future instructed and instituted in the Christian faith, may surely be received in baptism, the ceremony which is there prescribed by Christ with which to receive disciples." ¶ Witsius: —"Matt. xxviii. 'Go ye therefore, and *μαθητεύσατε*, *disciple* all nations, baptizing them,' &c. There Christ commands that disciples be gathered into His school, and, as persons in covenant with

* Crit. Sacr., ad verb.
‡ Instit. Theol., loc. xix., quest. xx., § 4.
‖ Poli Synops. in loc.
† Fam. Expos., vol. ii., § 202.
§ Clav. Nov. Test. in voce.
¶ Six Queries, quer. iv., § 25.

Him, sealed with the seal of baptism. But it is evident, that when parents become disciples of Christ, their *children* likewise are reckoned in the number of *disciples*. Just as among the Jews, together with the proselyte parents, their infants were initiated in the Jewish rites. It was needless, therefore, that Christ should make express mention of infants as the subjects of baptism." *

To these respectable authorities many more might be added, were it necessary; in whom we find μαθητεύω is expressive of such *discipleship* as includes infants and young children, no less than adults; and, consequently, the previous teaching is by no means *essential* to discipleship. Therefore, the word must be a *general term*, which does not, nor is intended, to express the *specific mode* of discipling. The *manner* of executing the command depends, entirely depends, on the capacities and circumstances of the persons to be discipled. And this discretionary nature of the commission, well attended to, is the only preventive against abuses.

Again; if infants and children cannot be *disciples*, they cannot be *Christians*, for these terms are convertible, and used synonymously, (Acts xi. 26;) and if not Christians, they cannot belong to Christ: but there are many such, our opponents grant, who belong to Christ, (see also Mark ix. 42;) therefore infants *may* be *disciples*, except it be said they may be admitted to glory without belonging to Christ, which is absurd. And if so, they may be *disciples* without human teaching, in the New Testament sense of discipleship.

Besides; if πάντα τὰ ἔθνη be the object of the command, μαθητεύσατε, we insist that the rendering DISCIPLE is more *obvious* and *natural* than the other, *teach*. For *discipling*, in the sense now explained, may naturally and strictly belong to *a nation*, to *all the nations;* but not teaching. Hence we further argue: if the *discipling* in the text be such as *may* comprehend *a nation*, nay, *all the nations*, as it certainly is, (except Christ commands an impossibility,) then it is such as *cannot* agree to that specific mode of discipling which is effected by *teaching, exclusively*. For, on Antipædobaptist principles, what tolerable propriety can there be in making *all nations* the objects of discipleship! According to them, the term *nation* must have a very singular acceptation indeed; for, in the first place, they must

* Witsii Œcon. Fœder., lib. iv. cap. xvi., § 41.

exclude from it *all infants* and young children; and, in the next place, they would exclude all adults, except the *few*, comparatively *very few*, who are deemed by them fit subjects of baptism. Well, when they have *taught* them, few as they may be, they must say, that the *nation* (!) is discipled. Does not such an interpretation militate against the plain and natural use of terms, and bid defiance to the force of language? On our principles, it may be some time first before *a nation* be discipled; but on our opponents', no nation *ever can* be. How much more rational and agreeable to the language of prophecy, and how much more worthy of the nature of the Messiah's visible kingdom, the following words of the judicious and venerable Turretine:—"*Μαθητὰς ποιειν* non est simpliciter docere, sed *discipulos facere.* [Matt. xxviii. 19, Probatur Pædobaptismus ex hoc mandato] ab antithesi nam *omnes gentis* opponuntur omnibus et solis Judæis, ut postulat discrimen Veteris et Novi Testamenti. Qui præcipit *omnes gentes* baptizari, is etiam præcipit baptizari *infantes*, præceptum enim de genere includit *omnes species.*"* To this let me add the following words of Bishop Beveridge:—"Our Lord Christ, a little before His ascension into heaven, left orders with His apostles, and in them with all that should succeed in the ministry of the Church to the end of the world, to make *all nations* His disciples, *by baptizing* them in the name, &c., as the original words plainly import, (Matt. xxviii. 19.) It is to be further observed, that when our Saviour ordained baptism to be the way or means of admitting persons into His Church, or the congregation of His disciples, lest we should think, as some have done, that He meant it only of those who are of riper years, He used the *most* GENERAL TERMS *that could be invented*, requiring that *all nations* should be baptized; and if *all nations*, then children also, which are a great, if not the greatest part of every nation." †

Moreover; there seems to me a peculiar propriety in our Lord's using terms of such *general import;* for had it been, instead of *μαθητεύσατε*, any term which *excludes* teaching as a mode of discipling, what a handle must ignorant and cruel bigots make of it in subjecting nations to the Christian faith! Ambitious missionaries might then justify their cruelties with specious arguments, and abuse their commission by pretending to Divine credentials.

* Instit. Theol., loc. xix., quest. xx., § 4.

† Priv. Thoughts, Part ii., On Christian Education, p. 6.

Would not *any other* term be liable to greater abuses and stronger objections than that which is wisely chosen? For instance, had διδάσκω or παιδεύω been adopted as terms *less general* to express the prerequisition for baptism, it would have weakened what we apprehend our Lord meant to countenance—viz., our obligation to receive children together with their parents into the visible Church, by the initiatory rite of baptism. On the other hand, had μυέω or τελέω been substituted for μαθητεύω, the same inconvenience would have followed. For though the two former, I presume, might have conveyed the main idea contained in the latter, (and accordingly some of the Greek fathers seem to use them synonymously; see Isidore of Pellusium, lib. ii., ep. 37, &c.,) yet they would have been on many accounts less eligible.

Once more; why, we wish to know, must we put a construction so unfavourable to infants (when no necessity requires it) upon every clause of the law which is deemed the rule of entrance into the Church militant; while our opponents themselves assume, and justly assume, the liberty of giving an *apparently opposite* construction to that law which refers to their admission to the Church triumphant? "He that *believeth not* shall be damned." Nay, we may add, we have greater apparent reason, from this very commission, (Mark xvi. 15, 16,) for excluding infants from salvation, than from baptism. For we contend that it is a law of nature that children should partake of all the external rites and privileges of religion they are capable of, and therefore baptism together with their parents; which cannot be said of their salvation.

To conclude; if infants were deemed, and justly deemed, *proselytes,** they may in like manner be deemed *disciples;* "for," as

* Dr Stennett, indeed, seems to deny this, when he says, "Is it proper to say of persons that they may be *proselyted* or discipled without any previous instruction, conviction, or persuasion?"—*Answer to Dr A.*, p. 133. To this I reply—

1. If it was *customary* among the Jews to call those who were translated from heathenism to the true religion, or the kingdom of God among them, GERIM, *foreigners* or *inmates;* and if it was *customary* for the Greeks to call these προσέλυτοι, *proselytes,* ἀπο του προσέληλυθεναι; and if it be FACT that *infants* were always reckoned, and by Divine appointment, (Exod. xii. 48, Num. xv. 14, 15,) among these *inmates,*—we may well ask what *impropriety* is there in calling an infant a *proselyte?*

2. It is an *incontestable fact* that the Jewish writers speak of *infants* and little children as *proselytes.* It is not only the *Gemara,* but the text of the *Misna* itself, both in the *Babylonian* and *Jerusalem Talmud,* which speaks of a *child* becoming,

a great critic observes, "a disciple and a proselyte being perfectly all one, save only that the latter denotes a *coming* from some *other nation* or country, which difference hath no place in this matter, where the disciples are specified to be received from *all nations.*"* And if *disciples*, they ought to be *baptized;* for the text in dispute affords no ground of exception against any who are *disciples.* "Nor ought that hoary maxim of legal interpretation to be hastily cast aside: *We* must not distinguish where the *law* does not distinguish." And should it be objected that infants are not *made* disciples, and therefore should not be baptized, we answer, if they *are* disciples, they must be *constituted* such; and whether that constitution be derived from a Divine appointment in favour of the *species*, from a ministerial act whereby they are proselyted to the Christian religion, (as heathen families were proselyted to the Jewish religion,) or from any other cause, is perfectly immaterial in the present argument. As to the trite objection urged from the *order* of the words, "teach—baptizing them," I answer, with Dr Addington, "It is, in every view, indefensible and ill-grounded. It is a *mere English* criticism;" † and with Dr Hammond, "The phrase which is there used in the *original* is a singular one, not duly expressed by our English." ‡ But, even in *our translation*, there is no *conjunction* to denote a diversity of acts; for it is not "teach *and* baptize," but "teach, baptizing them." Hence the author last quoted says, "We know from that place of Matt. xxviii. that baptism is the solemn ceremony of receiving into Christ's school, the Church." §

And, indeed, were our opposers indulged with their favourite rendering, *teach*, they must either renounce their singular notion

or being made, *a proselyte*. And the *Gemara* speaks expressly of "a proselyte in infancy." And Maimonides calls a little child or an *infant*, "a proselyte." (See Dr Wall's History of Infant Baptism, Introd., §§ 3, 4, with the authors there referred to.) This Dr Gill himself could not gainsay, and therefore gives it up, (Body of Div., vol. iii., 486.)

3. If a *proselyte* be *advena*, a *stranger*, one come over from one place or relation to another, as the term imports, what impropriety is there in applying it to infants? When we say "*strangers are come* to a place," is there any impropriety in our including *infants*, because *these* are strictly *brought?*

4. When our Lord says of *infants*, (Matt. xix. 14,) "Suffer them, and forbid them not, ἐλθεῖν πρός με," is there not the strictest propriety in calling *infants*, when brought, PROSELYTES?

* Dr Hammond's Six Quer., q. iv., § 27. † Christian Minister's Reas., p. 112.
‡ Ut supra, § 25. § Ibid., § 26.

of *positive institutions*, as utterly excluding all analogy and inferential reasoning, or find themselves involved in endless uncertainty; for on what authority can they deny baptism to *any* who are *taught?* And yet, how very unfit for baptism, our opponents being judges, are numbers who *are taught*, and who *profess* that Jesus is the Son of God and the only Saviour? But if "*we* must not distinguish where *this law* does not distinguish," what gross absurdities would follow? Not more opposite is the Antipædobaptist hypothesis to the *truth*, than subversive of *itself!*

§ 48. Let us next inquire, In what sense the apostles understood their commission? and, particularly, Whether they did not understand it to include the discipleship and baptism of infants with their parents? But here it is necessary to prescribe the limits of our inquiry. Now, since the *positive part* of the evidence has been already established, it would be sufficient for us, in point of strict argument, to act henceforth only on the *defensive;* for until that part be disproved, (which, I presume, will not be done in a hurry,) the smallest probability will be a corroborating addition. We shall, therefore, attend, in the remaining part of this chapter, to what we apprehend to be, in connexion with the premises, *additional* evidence; reserving for another place an examination of those passages in the apostolic writings which are supposed by our opposers to be inimical to Pædobaptism.

Let us begin with Acts ii. 39, "For the *promise* is to you, and to your *children*, and to all that are afar off, even to as many as the Lord our God shall *call.*" There are three terms in this passage—*promise, children, call*—the exact meaning of which it is necessary to ascertain before any deduction be attempted.

(First,) What are we to understand by *the* PROMISE? A satisfactory answer to this question requires that we should fix the meaning of the term ἐπαγγελία, *promise*, and determine what is the *matter promised;* for every promise is *of something.* Respecting the ἐπαγγελία, Stockius remarks:—"Generatim et vi originis ANNUNCIATIONEM significat. Speciatim autem notat *promissionem.* In hac significatione adhibetur nunc *proprie*, nunc *improprie* et *metonymice. Proprie* si adhibetur, denotat *actum voluntatis*, quo promittens se aliquid alteri daturum, vel facturum indicat ac denuntiat. *Improprie* et *metonymice* significat *rem promissam. Complementum et eventum promissionis,*" &c.* The

* Stockii Clav. Nov. Test., sub voce.

word often occurs in the New Testament, and is variously rendered by Latin interpreters; as, *promissum, promissio, pollicitatio, repromissio, nuncium*, &c. And Beza observes:—"Est autem notanda hæc propria significatio ἐπαγγελίας a doctissimo Budæo observata, quæ *gratuitum esse Dei promissum* declarat." * In our translation it is generally rendered *promise;* but in 1 John i. 5, *message.* The passage we are upon seems to be of the same import with Acts xiii. 26, "Men and brethren, children of the stock of Abraham, and whosoever among you feareth God, *to you is the word of this salvation* sent." Ver. 32, 33, "And *we declare unto you glad tidings,* how that the *promise* which was made unto the fathers, God hath fulfilled the same unto us their children, in that he hath raised up Jesus again." Or, "And we evangelise unto you that promise which was made unto the fathers, how that God," &c.

Now, whether the term *promise,* in Peter's address, signifies strictly, according to the force of the original, (ab ἐπι et ἀγγελος, Denunciatio divinæ voluntatis et beneficentiæ,†) *declaration, proclamation, annunciation, denunciation,* of the Divine will and pleasure, a *message,* &c.; or more particularly denotes "an *act of the will,* whereby the promiser *shews* and *declares* that something shall be given to another, or done for him;" it amounts in fact to the same thing, the difference being only circumstantial. For in this they both agree, that the *will* of the promiser must be *announced* to constitute either; and therefore must imply "*a declaration of God's will* concerning something." Nor is it again material whether it be taken *properly* or *metonymically* for the *thing promised;* because, in the present case, "the promise *of a thing*" is tantamount with "the thing promised." No difficulty, therefore, remains but what lies in ascertaining the *contents* of the promise, or *that* of which the promise is made.

Some seek the apostle's meaning from ver. 21, "And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord *shall be saved.*" Some seek it from ver. 38, where "the *remission of sin*" is promised. Others, from the last clause of the same verse, "and ye shall receive the *gift of the Holy Ghost;*" and the rather because this *immediately precedes* the controverted text. And others suppose that Peter here uses the phrase, "*the promise,*" by way of eminence and distinction. "The word [*promise*]

* Annot. in loc. † Vide Leigh. Crit. Sac.

in the New Testament," says Mr Cruden, "is *often* taken for those promises that God heretofore made to Abraham, and the other patriarchs, of sending the Messiah. It is in this sense that the apostle Paul *commonly* uses the word promise."* This use of the word in the text before us implies, "The aspect of the promise in its present accomplishment in Jesus Christ, is towards you and your children." In vindication of this sense, several expositors distinguish between the apostle's *advice* and his *encouragement*. His *advice*:—(1.) Repent, (2.) Be baptized, (3.) Every one of you. His *encouragement*:—(1.) The remission of sins, (2.) The gift of the Holy Ghost, (3.) The well-known promise refers to you and yours, notwithstanding your ungrateful and cruel treatment of the Messiah, who was the end and sum thereof. Thus Benedictus Aretius:—"Consilium Petri duas complectitur partes. Prior monstrat facienda: posterior addit rationes. Nam sine rationibus aliquid jubere rebus afflictis non satis est prudentis oratoris. Itaque orator apostolicus perspicuitati studet. Jubet facienda, ac consilii subnectit admodum perspicuas rationes. *Primum* a fine rem commendat: In REMISSIONEM PECCATORUM—*Alia ratio* est, QUIA ACCIPIETIS DONUM SPIRITUS *sancti*. *Tertio*, VOBIS ENIM est PROMISSIO FACTA ET LIBERIS VESTRIS, h. e. de Messia, et illius beneficiis, promissiones in primis spectant ad vos. *Quarto*, Declarat personas, ad quas spectant promissiones. VOBIS ET LIBERIS VESTRIS, ET QUI LONGE SUNT." †

This view of the passage appears to me most agreeable to the scope and occasion of it. For the apostle's reply and encouragement must be supposed *answerable* to the solicitude and inquiry of the awakened multitude. What particularly struck them, it seems, was "the evidence with which the apostle urged the *Messiahship* of *Jesus* from the Jewish writings, and the miraculous gifts which were now visible and astonishing." This was the great design of those miraculous effusions, "to reprove the world of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment"—that is, to be an unparalleled and invincible demonstration of the Messiahship of Jesus Christ. This is what he *principally* aimed at, and this idea he fixes in their minds, "as a nail fastened in a sure place," by concluding in these pungent and persuasive expressions: ver. 36,

* Concord., under the word *Promise*.

† Bened. Aret. Comment. in Act. ii. See also Calvin's admirable notes on the text in question.

"Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly, that God hath made that same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ." The historian adds—"Now when they heard this, they were pricked in their heart, and said unto Peter, and to the rest of the apostles, Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Peter replies, "Repent; and your sins, particularly your rejection and crucifixion of the Messiah, shall be remitted. Be baptized, every one of you; submit to this initiatory ordinance of His kingdom, which exhibits the influences of the Holy Spirit, and Christ shall baptize you, as John, His forerunner, has often declared, with the Holy Ghost: at least this is your path of duty,—He has the residue of the Spirit,—and do not imagine that the *grace of Christ*, or the blessings of His kingdom, are *peculiar* to *us*. For the well-known promise, grant, covenant, or EXHIBITION *of mercy and grace*, is common to us all. Do not suppose that *we* have any *other* Divine charter whereby we are entitled to these unspeakable blessings than what was granted of old to our forefathers; and this, you may be sure, is no less open to you, as a ground of application for the blessings of the Messiah's kingdom, than to us. And, according to what was said of old, that in HIM all the families of the earth were to be blessed, the time is come that the *Gentile* nations, as well as our own, are to be called to Him."

To *confine* the promise to the *miraculous* gifts of the Spirit, would be unworthy of an apostle; for it would be prescribing a remedy to the multitude, cut to the heart with remorse for their cruel treatment of Jesus, inadequate to the disease. When he speaks of *the promise*, it must be as a *ground* of their faith and their access to God; but nothing can be so to fallen man but a dispensation of mercy, a sacred warrant, salvation through a Redeemer, the ministry of reconciliation—in a word, the *covenant of grace* in its exhibition and direction to him. I say, in its EXHIBITION or external form, for this, and this *alone*, properly speaking, is the ground of a sinner's approach to God. "To us are given"—that is, *exhibited* for our use and encouragement—"exceeding great and precious *promises*, that by these we might be partakers of the divine nature," (2 Pet. i. 4.) For the apostle to assure his hearers that the *promise was to them*, in their present circumstances, was the same as to *preach the gospel to them*. And these are used synonymously. (See Gal. iii. 8, 18.) For, *to*

give Abraham a Divine PROMISE, is the same as *to preach the* GOSPEL *to him.*

Besides; is there any probability *in fact* that ALL who complied with this exhortation received *the promise*, if the *miraculous gifts* of the Spirit as about to be conferred upon them be thereby intended? Or was *this* promise made to the mixed multitude,—to their children *as such*, whether their immediate offspring or posterity,—to *all* afar off, whether Jews or Gentiles, that the Lord should *call?* If this interpretation were admitted, would it not follow that we sinners of the Gentiles, being some of the ALL *that were afar off*, upon being *called* of the Lord, upon *repentance* and *baptism*, may expect from *the promise* the *miraculous gifts* of the Holy Ghost? In my opinion, it could be *then* no *just motive* either to repentance, to be baptized, or to any Christian duty, *of itself;* and to us who are called and afar off, it can be *no motive at all.* And, indeed, had any complied from such an expectation of miraculous endowments, except in subordination to a *more important* promise, their mercenary motive must stand condemned as unworthy of Christianity, and therefore unworthy of an inspired teacher of it to recommend. But should any contend that the *promise* refers to the Holy Ghost in His ordinary gracious influences, and not merely those which were miraculous, this is virtually to admit that sense of the passage for which I plead; for it implies and eminently contains what the Scriptures term *κατ' ἐξοχην, the promise.* "To conclude this point, the apostle himself has plainly informed us, in another place, what he here intends by the promise, (see Acts iii. 25;) where, urging much the same exhortation upon his Jewish hearers as he does here, he enforces it with this argument: 'Ye are the children of the covenant [or promise, according to Gal. iii. 1] which God made with our fathers, [or granted to our fathers—*ἥς διέθετο ὁ Θεὸς πρὸς τοὺς πατέρας ἡμῶν,*] saying unto Abraham, And in thy seed shall all the kindreds of the earth be blessed; unto you *first* [or *primarily* for your sake] God hath raised up his Son Jesus, and sent him to bless you," &c.*

§ 49. (Second,) Who are the *persons to whom* the promise is made? "The promise is unto *you*, and to your *children*, and to *all* that are *afar off*, even *as many* as the Lord our God *shall call.*" "The promise is unto *you*," says the apostle; *you* who now hear

* Bostwick's Fair and Rational Vindication of Infant Baptism, p. 9.

me; *you* who compose this vast assembly, of every nation, rank, and age. *You* does the Lord our God *call to repentance*, who have rejected and murdered the Prince of life; on whom the guilt of the horrid deed, so impiously imprecated on yourselves and children, must otherwise abide. *You*, without exception, who are *capable* of remorse, does the Lord our God *call to repentance*, inasmuch as all of you have sins to repent of, and a state to be changed for the better. And to *each* one of you, without the least exception, is the *promise*, the glad tidings of mercy, made. And as *baptism* is the instituted *seal* of that promise, you may be sure that if the one belongs to you, the other does of course; for if the testamentary grant be yours, it follows that every confirmation of that grant is yours, of which nature baptism is. Here we might ask, Is it not reasonable to suppose, that among so great a multitude there were some children and infants in arms before the apostle? and if so, By what rule were such excepted from being included in this declaration, "the promise is unto *you?*" Were they not addressed as a body? Or, will it be said, "All who were capable of *repentance* were addressed?" Nay, rather, all who were capable of repentance were called to repent; and all who were capable of the promise or Divine grant and its seal were included therein. And no one can deny that infants are capable of bequeathments and grants (and, consequently, the *sealing* of them) in their favour.

But, to put this matter further out of doubt, the apostle adds, "*the promise*," or grant, "*is to your* CHILDREN," τοῖς τέκνοις. It appears to me a matter of no great moment, in this controversy, whether we understand by the term *children*, sons and daughters, seed, offspring, descendants, posterity, or any other the like; for none of these expressions *exclude* infants, which is sufficient for our purpose. If there be any *exclusion* in the case, it must be sought, not from *these terms*, but some *other* considerations; which is foreign to the present point. Suppose, for instance, our opponents attempt the exclusion of infants, by adopting the term *posterity*, it will not serve their turn; for who can we understand by the *posterity* of a person or persons, but those who lineally come after, or descend from such? And is not the term applicable to them as soon as they exist? Are they not such in every stage of life? Besides, were that interpretation allowed, which excludes all from posterity but adults, what would it prove? Why, that the *pro-*

mise is to the adult *posterity* of this audience, though they were Jews or Mohammedans, but *not* to the infant offspring of any Christian. But must we regard our infant children, though born in sin, *in a less favourable condition*, as to any merciful grant, than the obstinate Jew and the deluded Turk? He that *can* believe it, let him.

Nor is it material whether the phrase, "all that are afar off," refer to distant Jews or Gentiles; distant as to place or time. From this phrase infants are not excluded, nay, are clearly implied.

But says Mr B., "There is nothing said about the promise respecting any, besides those whom 'the Lord our God shall *call*.' Yes, whether they be Jews or Gentiles, whether they be parents or children, they must be *called*, before this text will permit us to view them as interested in that promise of which it speaks."* To this we readily subscribe; but deny what he immediately subjoins —"which entirely excludes infants from all consideration here." This will lead us to inquire—

§ 50. (Third,) What are we to understand by the term προσκαλέσηται, CALL? The word προσκαλέομαι, which often occurs in the New Testament, (though never, I believe, in its active form,) plainly and properly signifies, *advoco, accerso, adcisco, arcesso*, &c. Leigh:—"Utrumque significat, et *convocare* et *ad se vocare*, (Matt. x. 1, &c.)"† Stockius:—"Generatim notat *advocare* connotato termino ad quem, sive hic sit persona sive res personæ opposita. Est *vocare gentes* AD ECCLESIAM, per predicationem evangelii, (Acts ii. 39.)"‡ But here we should carefully distinguish between *God's call* and *men's compliance* with it. The *latter* of these ideas is out of the present question; being excluded by the nature of the subject, and the proper force of the term. Nor should we confound the CALL *of the gospel* with God's *secret* choice of individuals, or His *efficacious* drawing of them to Himself to love and serve Him in spirit and in truth. These things belong to a sovereign invisible dispensation; a dispensation of quite a different nature from what our apostle mainly intends. And, indeed, with regard to what is termed *effectual calling*, which Mr B. seems to take for granted is here intended, the *call* must not be confounded with the *effect* of it. In my apprehension, the

* Pædobaptism Examined, p. 362. † Critica Sacra, sub voce.
‡ Clav. Nov. Test., sub voce.

secret and efficacious influence of God on the sinner's mind, whereby it is disposed to receive the truth, is very impropely termed God's *call.* . For His *calling* of them, properly speaking, is by His *word*, His will *revealed*, the *ministry* of reconciliation, &c. ; but what renders this calling *effectual*, is the imparted influence or powerful operation of the Spirit on the mind, and thereby a disposition, inclination, or moral ability, is produced, to *comply* with the call. Hence "*many* are *called*, but *few* are *chosen*." *

Besides ; the promise, or gospel grant, is not any blessing conferred *in* CONSEQUENCE *of effectual calling*, but in *subserviency* to it. For the promise is the *foundation* of our access to God, and our *encouragement* to repentance, and not a blessing consequent upon either. Repenting, complying, coming to God, &c., are *our* acts and exercises ; but without a promise they have no ground, no motive, no existence. Persons, families, and nations, are *called* THAT THEY MAY COMPLY, and the promise is given them as the *inducement*. When any *actually comply* with the purport of the call, we are taught and obliged to ascribe that efficiency, not to our own distinguishing worthiness and ability, but to the power of God, executing the plan of sovereign distinguishing love. Thus God *calls*, but man, through the stupifying effect of sin, refuses ; yet when God *works* in us both to will and to do of His good pleasure, who can let? Nevertheless, the blessings promised, or exhibited in the promise, become actually ours in consequence of our answering the Divine requisition or *call*.

On the whole ; as the apostle has no reference to the *internal* power of grace, we are constrained to seek his meaning in the *external* call of the gospel. Into whatever part of the Gentile world, as if he had said, the cloud of Divine Providence moves, from henceforth the ministry of reconciliation, or God's *call* to men by the gospel, is designed to follow it. Our call has no limitation but what arises in the course of providential conduct. If *all* the Gentile nations are not actually evangelised, such confinement and seeming partiality is not owing to any limiting clause in our commission, but to the all-wise conduct of Providence, while it opens a door of entrance to some nations, and leaves others for a time shut. But no sooner is a person, a family, a nation, or a people *evangelised*, or addressed by a gospel ministry, than we can assure them that the promise is to *them and theirs*. If they *reject* the

* Matt. xx. 16, xxii. 14.

call, they reject also the promise; and if they *reject* the promise, grant, or covenant, they have no right to the *seal;* for the instrument and the seal must not be separated. *External* compliance is sufficient to secure whatever is in the covenant of an *external nature;* and baptism, the initiating seal, being *such*, by that compliance it is secured. But an *internal* and spiritual compliance, and that alone, secures to us whatever is in the covenant of an *internal* and spiritual *nature.* And whence the ability to comply, as before observed, belongs to another question, and flows from the covenant of redemption, well ordered in all things and sure, in its *internal form.*

We might again ask, Are any individuals, families, tribes, or nations *proselyted* to the visible Church of God without being *called?* Does not *proselyting* of necessity imply *calling?* Yet infants may be *proselyted* with their parents, as parts of themselves, as members of families, and as making a very considerable part of those *nations* that may be *joined to the Lord;* and therefore such infants should be reckoned among the *called.* On the whole, the following remark of Calvin on the place appears very just and comprehensive:—"Christus diruta maceria, utrosque reconciliavit Patri, et veniens annunciavit pacem his qui *prope* erant, et his qui *procul.* Nunc tenemus Petri mentem. Nam ut Christi gratiam amplificet, eam Judeis sic proponit, ut Gentes quoque fore consortes dicat. Ideo utitur *verbo advocandi:* acsi diceret, Quemadmodum vos prius in unum populum sua voce collegit Deus, ita vox eadem ubique personabit, ut qui remoti sunt, ad vos accedant, ubi novo Dei edicto fuerint accersiti." *

Now if this be the meaning of the text, it appears—(1.) That wherever the *dispensation* of the gospel comes, there the *promise* comes. For to be *called* is to be "*invited* to the honours and the privileges of the visible Church;" and to be *the called,* as expressive of a continued state, in the scriptural style, is to be actually possessed of such privileges. Thus Isa. xlviii. 12, "Hearken unto me, O Jacob and Israel, *my called;*" Rom. i. 6, "Among whom are ye also *the called* of Jesus Christ;" ver. 7, "To *all* that be in Rome, beloved of God, *called* to be saints," &c. (2.) That no people are actually *the called* of God, in a state of gospel privileges, but their children, *as theirs,* or in virtue of their right in them, are included with them. (3.) When we consider this, in

* Calvini Comment. in Act. ii. 39.

connexion with preceding revelations, we cannot say, properly, that infants' *right* to their parents' privileges, inclusive of the promise and initiatory seal, is *founded* here, but *confirmed:* rather, what is *founded* in the law of nature, what is *implied* in every dispensation, and what has been in many instances explicitly *ratified*, is here *asserted* and *confirmed* against all suspicion to the contrary—viz., That the promise, covenant, or grant of mercy is not more to the parents than to their children; and, consequently, the initiating and confirming seal of that grant, baptism.*

§ 51. We come now to inquire what *additional* evidence we have from the account given us of HOUSEHOLDS;—from Acts xvi. 15, "When she [*i.e.*, Lydia] was baptized, and her *household;*" Acts xvi. 33, "And was baptized, he [*i.e.*, the keeper of the prison at Philippi] and *all his*, straightway;" 1 Cor. i. 16, "I baptized also the *household* of Stephanas." But here it is necessary to premise what is the just use and real importance of these passages in the controversy. Our opponents would fain insinuate, that if we cannot demonstrate hence there actually were infants in these families, and that these were baptized, the texts in question are of *no use* to the Pædobaptist cause. But this is a great mistake. We insist, from *other* premises, that parents *ought* to baptize their children; therefore we do not urge these texts to *prove their right*, but to *increase the probability* that they were *de facto* baptized. I say, to increase the *probability;* for it is evident, from the nature of the controversy, that these texts, which refer to a case of *fact*, should be weighed only in the scales of *right;* and that the balance of probability will preponderate according as the previous right is proved or disproved.

We have insisted from various topics,—the law of nature, the Divine dispensations, prophetic language, our Lord's ministry and commission, &c.,—that religion, that is, Christianity, (for the *nature* of it does not alter the case,) is a *family* concern. In other words, a man's children, and non-opposing domestics, are not only to be *denominated* from his religious profession, as the head of the family, but are entitled to all the external *privileges* of that

* It may be here remarked, that the interpretations of Dr Owen and Witsius, of Hammond and Limborch, are not at all inconsistent with Pædobaptist principles as here stated, though produced by Mr B. in favour of Antipædobaptism; and the same remark is applicable to numerous other instances in the work I am examining.

religion, as instituted means of grace and godliness, according to their respective capacities. When, therefore, we hear of a man who has a family, that he has become a believer, a disciple, or a Christian, we infer (and the more excellent the nature and quality of his religion, the more rational the inference)—we infer that his family is a *Christian family;* and that each member of it, that is not an *opposer*, is entitled to those privileges he himself enjoys, according as it is capable. I say not an *opposer*, for to compel any, who are *sui juris*, would be impious, since Christianity, in this important particular, does not interfere with the rights of nature. And the matter of *right* standing thus, it would be *uncharitable* and *unreasonable* to suppose the matter of *fact* to be otherwise, especially in the apostolic age. We may therefore conclude, when we read, "her HOUSEHOLD," "his HOUSEHOLD," "ALL HIS" were baptized, that these things are spoken of *households* or families *as such*, or *collectively;* and that we should not understand the terms distributively, but with the proviso of *pro captu singulorum*. For, if a man's children be equally capable of baptism with himself, and believing or repenting is a qualification not at all essential to the ordinance, as belonging to its *nature*, but only necessary to those who are capable of them, there remains no ground of exception against infants; that is, if there were any children or infants in any of the families referred to, we *ought* to conclude they *were* baptized. The parent, or head of the family, would, *of course*, according to all the sources of information he could consult,—if a *heathen*, the light of nature, if a *Jew*, the Old Testament, and more especially in either case from the *genius* of Christianity,—consider his dependents, particularly his children, being at his disposal for their benefit, as entitled to the *same privileges*, or means of grace and religion, as himself, *if not* EXPRESSLY PROHIBITED.

Mr B., availing himself of Limborch's concession, that the argument from the account of *households* being baptized amounts to no more than a *bare probability* that there were any *infants* baptized as well as adults in those families, seems to forget that a *bare probability* (*cæt. par.*) is *very sufficient* to influence an impartial mind. For if one side of a question be only *barely* PROBABLE, all things considered, the other side surely is *so far* IMPROBABLE. "It may admit of a query," says Mr B., "whether, in this metropolis, a *majority* of households have any mere infants in them." Granted; but will it admit of a query, whether *three*

families for *one* in the metropolis, or in any city, town, or parish in the kingdom, or, more properly, in those parts of the world and that age which these passages refer to, had any? Our argument fairly rests not on ONE family *separately* considered, but on the THREE unitedly. Otherwise, could we produce a *thousand* instances out of the sacred records of a person's *household*, or *all his*, being baptized, Mr B.'s mode of arguing would leave the *probability* the *very same;* which is absurd.

As to what is urged from these phrases,—"Elkanah, and *all his house*, went up to offer unto the Lord the yearly sacrifice;" a nobleman at Capernaum "believed, and his *whole house;*" Cornelius "feared God with *all his house;*" unruly talkers "subvert *whole houses;*" Paul and his companion "spake the word of the Lord" to the Philippian jailor, "and to *all* that were in his house;" "he, believing in God, rejoiced, *with all his house;*" "Ye know the house of Stephanas, that *it* is the *first-fruits of Achaia*, and that they have addicted themselves to the ministry of the saints;"* and the like,—let any unprejudiced mind reflect whether such phrases be not *perfectly consistent* with our account of households; nay, whether they do not directly tend to *establish* it. For is not this an idea most naturally suggested, that religion, according to the *sacred oracles*, as well as from the reasonableness of the thing, is, though *internally* considered a *personal* concern, yet, as *externally* professed, a *family* concern. Do not such passages intimate, and more than barely intimate, that no surer do the means of grace belong to a person than they belong to *his household as such?* "In all which examples," says Mr B., "infants must be excepted."† If by *examples* he intends the *actions* connected with the universal terms, "whole house," "all his house," &c.,—such as, "all his house *went up to offer*," "his whole house *believed*," "all his house *feared God*," "unruly talkers *subvert* whole houses," "Paul *spake the word* to all in a house," and so on,—it is manifest such examples are nothing to the purpose. For our arguments do not *imply*, what such a remark seems alone calculated to shew, that we ascribe to infants what they are *naturally incapable* of. But if by "examples" he means the universal terms, "all," "whole," &c., as being the *subjects* of those actions,

* 1 Sam. i. 21; John iv. 53; Acts x. 2; Tit. i. 11, 12; Acts xvi. 32, 34, xviii. 8; 1 Cor. xvi. 15.

† Pædobaptism Examined, p. 369.

and, therefore, there could be *no infants* in those families, our author confutes himself; for he owns "it is not uncommon for the sacred writers to assert this or the other concerning a household, without any express limitation, which is manifestly meant of only the *greater part.*" * His "examples," therefore, neither tend to shew that there were *no infants* in the households in question, nor, supposing there were any, that they were *not baptized.* Not the *former;* for in the very examples he produces there might have been infants, from his own *concession,* provided the *greater part* be adults. Not the *latter;* for that an infant should be *baptized* implies no *impossibility,* as the *actions* in the "examples" produced do, nor anything *improbable,* without begging the question in debate. What the objection really proves is what no one ever denied—that there *may* be families *without* infants! To which we beg leave to make a reply suitable to its importance—there *may* be families *with* infants. But is it not *probable* that in *three families* there was an infant or a young child? And is it not *very probable,* if infants were *capable* of the rite of baptism as well as the parents, that they were *baptized?* But what do I say? Will not the following objection mar the whole?—

"If our opposers would be true to their argument, by acting consistently with it, they must, when called to baptize the *master* of a family, administer the same ordinance to his *wife,* his *children,* and his *domestics,* without exception, if not baptized before, whether they profess repentance towards God and faith in Christ or not." †

No, this is not a legitimate consequence. For—

(1.) Though a master has a right over his children, and in some measure his other domestics, for their good and benefit, this does not imply that he ought to act the tyrant, to force the conscience, or to use compulsion in religious matters.

(2.) Our argument, and our acting consistently with it, require no such promiscuous and unreasonable proceedings as the objection insinuates. The law by which we suppose a parent or a master ought to be ruled in those cases is this—that he benefit his children, and *all his,* as they are *capable.* And, accordingly, we insist—

(3.) That *infancy* is no greater objection to baptism than to proselytism or circumcision, that is, is no just plea of exclusion at all; whereas an *opposition* to Christ, His gospel, and the means of grace, is a reasonable and scriptural ground of exclusion. No

* Pædobaptism Examined, p. 369. † Ibid., pp. 370, 371.

man has a right to *force* another, in matters of judgment and conscience, in proportion as that other has a right to judge for himself, even in the most advantageous and momentous concerns. And that there may be adult persons in a family, whose inalienable right of private judgment overbalances the authority and right of the domestic head, I suppose none will deny. Hence we conclude that—

(4.) Though the promise and its initiatory seal may be *rejected* by some of a man's domestics, yet that these were *intended* and directed to him and to ALL HIS *as such;* and consequently that this is a sufficient reason for us to conclude that ALL of them are entitled thereto, economically, who do not *reject* the counsel of God against themselves, as the Pharisees and lawyers did, (Luke vii. 29, 30.) *

* "When Zaccheus, who was not by birth a son of Abraham, but a sinner, a Gentile, was thus converted, Christ enlargeth his COVENANT to his *family* also: 'This day is salvation come to this *house*, inasmuch as he also is a son of Abraham,' (Luke xix. 9.) He makes [his believing in Christ] the reason why his HOUSE should be saved also, and so the *covenant* stuck with them of his *family* likewise, *because the father of the family was now a believer.* And let me add this, that as Christ once before, in the conversion of the centurion, the first-fruits of the Gentiles, (Matt. viii.,) did first break open the treasury of the Gentiles' conversion, so upon occasion of this man's conversion afterwards, He shews the *privilege* of the Gentiles *when* converted,—shewing how their *covenant* was to run by HOUSEHOLDS, in a conformity to Abraham's family at first. Thus, in like manner, when the apostles came to preach the gospel to a Gentile *householder*, master or father of a *family*, they carried the offer of it in *this tenor*, and in the way of *this privilege*, as a MOTIVE to conversion. In the New Testament we find in the *event* (which still answers to *promises*) that the gospel spread itself through *whole* HOUSEHOLDS, this being the tenure of our *covenant*. Now, then, when the covenant thus runs with the *heads of houses* for the *families* themselves, I argue thus from thence for their *children*, that *they* must needs be included and intended in a more *special* manner; for they are the *natural* branches, and servants but *engrafted*, as was said of the Jews and Gentiles in the like case. The *house* of Aaron and his *children* are put for one and the same, (Ps. cxv. 12, 15.) In like phrase of speech, Leah and Rachel, in bringing forth children, are said to build up the *house* of Israel, (Ruth iv. 11.) And so the word HOUSE is used for *posterity* in all languages. And for the further confirmation of this, namely, that this tenure of the Gentiles' covenant in a conformity to Abraham's, should run thus *by families* from the *heads* thereof, this doth fully suit with the original promise made to Abraham himself, when the Scripture foresaw (as Paul's phrase is) that the Gentiles should be justified—*as his seed.* The promise (Gen. xii. 3) runs in these terms:—'In thee shall all the *families* of the earth be blessed;' as elsewhere (Gen. xviii. 18, xxii. 18) it runs in these terms:—'All the *nations* of the earth shall be blessed.' These expressions are both used to shew the seed should be of all *nations and people;* yet so as, withal, the covenant was to run *by families* in those nations. Therefore

§ 52. Among those passages which tend to shew in what sense the apostles understood their commission with respect to the Jewish and Gentile nations, is Rom. xi. 11–31, on which I would offer the following reflections :—

First, Nothing less seems implied by the apostle than that the conversion of the Gentiles was intended to be *national*, as appears from the whole of his reasoning. That is, he considers them as a *people*, or as a *body*, in the same sense as the Jews were so. All must allow his idea is a *collective* one ; and we further insist that the *individuals* or members of the Gentile or gospel Church here described cannot be adults *exclusively*. His idea of the Gentile Church is such as *cannot agree* to a company of adult believers, or the Antipædobaptist notion of the gospel Church. And if this assertion be made good, either they or Paul must be wrong. Let us briefly analyse and investigate the apostle's reasoning.

(1.) He employs such *general terms*, in contrasting the gospel Church with the Jewish, as, we apprehend, would be very improper to express any other church-state than that which agrees to a body of people, comprehending old and young. Thus he uses the terms *Gentiles*, or *nations*, the *world*, *Israel*, &c.

the New Testament quotes it in both senses. Gal. iii. 8 says, *πάντα τὰ ἔθνη, all nations ;* Acts iii. 25, *αἱ πατριαὶ, fatherhoods* of the earth.

"And further; this was the *primitive and natural church way*, under the *law of nature*, afore Moses; unto which, therefore, for ever God hath suited this *family covenant*, and in Abraham ratified and sanctified it to the end of the world. And the reason why God chose this of a *family* to convey the covenant by, was, that this society was the only *natural society* of all others, and therefore God did always choose it throughout all states of the Church. God herein engrafting (as He uses to do grace on nature in our spirits when He converts us, so) His covenant of grace upon this covenant of nature to run in the channel of it."—See *Dr Thomas Goodwin's Works*, vol. ii., p. 391–393. But let the less-informed reader carefully distinguish, in judging of God's covenant to man, to families, &c., between the *exhibition made* and the *grace possessed*. The present controversy has to do immediately only with the *former*, which is *alone*, strictly speaking, the foundation of a sinner's encouragement to draw near to God for mercy, grace, and every needful blessing. As to the notion of hereditary *grace possessed*, as if *this* descended from father to son, it is equally unscriptural and absurd. That the Lord should condescend to declare that He *will be* A GOD *unto me and mine*, is one thing, (and how unspeakable the privilege!) but for me to conclude from thence that I am *possessed* of grace, or a person *actually justified*, would be highly presumptuous. He is my God; *that I may* BELIEVE, &c., but not that I may conclude upon my *state* as if it proved my *justification*, &c. And yet, when from just premises I infer my *justified state*. I may safely call the Lord "my God" in the *more peculiar* and discriminating sense.

(2.) The manner in which he *contrasts* the *partial fall*, and the *complete restoration* of the Jews, as also the different states of the Jews and the Gentiles, is *incompatible* with that hypothesis which we oppose.

(3.) His *figurative illustration* of the Jewish and gospel Churches affords another argument in favour of our view of the subject. He speaks of the two Churches as the *root* and *branches* of a tree; and the *lopping off* answers to the *grafting in*.

(4.) The *assignable cause* of the Jews' rejection, *unbelief*, and the *remedial means* of their reinstatement, *believing*, are mentioned in such a connexion and light as cannot be understood of their subjects as *individuals*, but as a *body of people*, consisting of old and young, parents and children. Their unbelief consisted in the general and *national rejection* of the Messiah; and their faith, the only mean of their desirable reinstatement, must consist in a *general reception* of Christ.

(5.) The *universality* of their *future conversion* is represented in such a manner as totally disagrees with the Antipædobaptist view of gospel privileges in general, and church-membership in particular.

(6.) As their *standing* before their renunciation of the Messiah was *complete*, like a perfect olive-tree consisting of root and branch, or like the vine which God brought out of Egypt, planted in Canaan, and which covered the whole land with its luxuriant ramifications; so their having *quitted* that standing is represented by the apostle in such a manner as to shew them highly *blamable* and *criminal*. That *standing*, then, was what they *ought* to have maintained; therefore it was not any *peculiarity* of covenant relation designed to cease and to be annihilated under the Messiah. Whatever they were *before* their national unbelief, their *stumbling*, and *diminishing*,—whatever that *fulness* was they *fell from*, on account of which they are here represented as *faulty* and *sinful*, it inevitably follows, that it was such a *standing* and *fulness* as the gospel was not *intended* to abolish, but was calculated to establish and promote. But what could such a *standing* and complete *fulness* or abundance be? Was it their *standing* fast in *personal piety?* Was it their abounding in *adult believers*, when it was attempted to prevent their downfall? Was it any *peculiar privilege* designed to last until the Messiah came, and no longer? No; neither of these suppositions can possibly be true. Not the

two first, for they are contradicted by plain matter of fact; nor the *last*, for it is incontrovertibly *implied*, that if they left their standing, and lost their fulness, it was owing to their sin, their *blindness*, &c.; and on the other hand, if they, as a nation or body of people, received the Redeemer, their fall and diminution would be *prevented*.

In short, from the very dawn of gospel light nothing else was intended than their *national salvation*, or continued *church-relation* to God as a body at large. To this tended the flaming zeal of John the Baptist; to this tended the venerable ministry of the Son of God, and the constant efforts of His ministering disciples, under His direction; to this tended the unwearied labours, fervent prayers, and affectionate exhortations of His inspired apostles; and especially after this Paul ardently pursued,—to accomplish this he could "wish himself accursed from Christ," and for non-success herein he had "great heaviness and continual sorrow in his heart," (Rom. ix. 2, 3.)

But, if this was the real avowed *intendment* of the gospel ministry, which Mr B. neither does, nor, I presume, can deny, relative to all the inhabitants of Judea; it follows from the *whole drift* of the apostle's argumentation, from the *general terms* he employs, from the *contrast* he draws, and from his *figurative illustrations* and comparisons, that the real avowed intendment of the gospel ministry among the Gentiles, or *all the nations* of the world, is nothing less extensive than their *national salvation*,—that is, their external church-relation to God as bodies at large, comprehensive of all ages and descriptions of mankind.*

Moreover; the *future fulness* of the Jews, to be accomplished by their embracing Jesus Christ as their Messiah, will *reinstate* them in their former position. Ver. 23, "And they also, if they abide not still in unbelief, shall be *grafted in* AGAIN." "Grafted

* The inspired prophets "extol not merely the inherent excellence, but *wide extent*, of the heavenly kingdom. Whenever the prospect rises before them, and it was often presented to their view, their heart glows with instant rapture at the splendid scene; the powers of language are exhausted to convey their lofty conceptions of those days of gladness, when all nations whom the Lord hath made shall turn unto Him, and walk in the light of His holy word. We do not assert, that in order to warrant the expressions used on this occasion, it is necessary that every individual of the human species should serve God with a pure heart and faith unfeigned; but if the *whole race* shall not hereafter be, what they have not yet been, VISIBLE MEMBERS OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST, language is useless, and words have no meaning."—*Charlton's Bampton Lectures*, Serm. vii., p. 223.

in again!" How? *Reinstate* them! In what? No solid answer but one can be assigned—viz., In all those *church-privileges* which they enjoyed, as a general body of people, excepting what was merely typical and ceremonial. But the *church-membership* of infants and children was *not such*; it was before Moses, before Abraham, more ancient than the flood, yes, coeval with the first family in the world. Therefore, *this* will be a part of the restored privilege. While they continue to renounce all connexion with Christ the Life of the tree, His Church, they must needs be withered branches; but, receiving Him, both the branches and their *buds* shall vegetate again in the visible universal Church.

Mr B., in his *Reflection* on ver. 16, says, "Here it may be observed that baptism is not the subject of Paul's discourse." Granted; but he must grant also, in his turn, that *church-membership* and *church-privileges* are the subject of Paul's discourse. And he will find it too difficult to shew that baptism is not *included* therein; which leads me to another reflection, viz.—

Second, That the apostle's reasoning *necessarily includes infant baptism.* It has been, I think, demonstrated in the last section, that infant church-membership and privileges are included in his reasoning; that the Christian Church, both of Gentiles and Jews, must, according to him, be made up in a great measure of infants and children,—that is to say, the gospel ministry or dispensation *designs* and *intends*, in its own nature, nothing short of this. But if so, the consequence is evident that they are *entitled* thereto by the very nature of the gospel Church, and à *Divine grant.* According to Paul,—that is, according to the genuine spirit and native tendency of the gospel; according to the *will of God;* according to the last will and testament of Jesus, which He sealed with His own blood; and according to the witness of the Spirit of truth, by whose infallible direction Paul reasoned and wrote,—infants have a *right* of church-membership with their parents. But who sees not, that if they have that right, they have, of course, a right to *baptism*, the ceremony of *initiation.* To deny this would be as ridiculous as to say, that a man and his family have a legal right to a house, but dare not enter it through the door, the only door, that leads to it; or that he has a legal right to certain premises, but has nothing to do with the ways and avenues leading thereto.

The apostle says, (Rom. xi. 16,) "For if the first-fruit be *holy*,

the lump is also *holy;* and if the root be *holy,* so are the branches." On which Mr B. reflects, that the word *holy* is mentioned "in reference to the *ancient patriarchs,* especially Abraham; in reference to those converted Jews that were the *first-fruits* of a Christian ministry; and in reference to the *future conversion* of Abraham's posterity in the latter day:" and immediately infers "that the passage has no regard to any Christian parent as a *root,* or to his infant offspring as *branches* arising from it."* But how do the premises, supposing them unexceptionable, support his conclusion? For suppose the *first-fruit* be the *ancient patriarchs,* were not those their descendants, who *received* the Messiah, a part of the *lump* or consecrated mass? Or must we say, that their reception of Him, and submission to His righteous government, made them an *unholy,* or *less* holy, part of that lump? It cannot be denied that what is here called the *lump* intends the *descendants* of these patriarchs as such, without any exception of infants; the *infants,* therefore, of their descendants, who had not as yet embraced the Messiah, were of the *holy* lump; and shall those parts of the same mass be pronounced *unholy,* BECAUSE of their parents' obedient faith? While *to-day* the parent *rejects* the Messiah, he and his children are parts of the *holy lump* alike; but *to-morrow* the parent *embraces* the same invaluable blessing, and HE *continues* in his privilege, and has it greatly *increased,* but his CHILDREN,—still the *descendants* of Abraham, and, were it not for their parents' *faith,* would still be *holy,*—his *children* become *unholy!* While they were *holy,* it was their *privilege,* for in that view the apostle speaks of it. But, lo! on Antipædobaptist principles, the parent's *faith* makes the child *unholy!* the parent's *promotion degrades* the child! "He that *can* believe it, let him believe it."

Again; supposing the *first-fruit* to intend the first Jewish converts to Christianity, it still follows that the *whole mass,* of which they are a part, is *holy;* and it appears from the scope of the passage that this holiness of the lump is not what *shall hereafter* take place as the *effect* of gospel-preaching, but is represented as the encouraging reason why the gospel *ought* to be preached to them. The apostle's argument, it seems, is not, Inasmuch as some Jews *do* now believe, this is a token and pledge that Abraham's posterity at large *shall* believe hereafter; but rather, Because the *other* parts of the lump are *no less* holy than that which

* Pædobaptism Examined, p. 373.

received the Messiah, *therefore* there was an encouraging prospect of their conversion also. But if this be denied, the case is still worse. For if it be said that the Jewish converts to Christianity were the *first-fruit* in reference to the future church-state of *all Israel*, and that the consecration of the *part* sanctified the *whole*; it then follows, contrary to what our opponents are willing to allow, that the unconverted are *sanctified*, or made *holy*, by being only related to Christians: and if so, for the same reason, children may be said to be sanctified or holy by their relation to Christian parents. For to say, that the *remote* posterity of any is holy on account of its relation to him, but not his *immediate* descendants, who are more nearly and closely related to him, is, I suppose, sufficiently absurd. I now appeal to the intelligent and impartial reader, whether this is not a fair and full reply to Mr B.'s objection.

But as it is my professed design not only to confute error, but also to investigate truth, it may be proper to inquire, what is the real import of the term HOLY, here used by St Paul? "By *holy* is here meant," says Mr Locke, "that relative holiness whereby anything hath an *appropriation* to God." * Or, more particularly, we may say, a *holy* person, in the relative sense of that word, is one to whom God gives a covenant grant of mercy and the means of grace, and in virtue of which grant he is *appropriated* to God. This appears to me to be the leading idea of the term, and its precise import in the present connexion, though sometimes used in a different sense. For if the whole nation of the Jews was *holy* in the apostolic age, the *whole mass* as well as the *first-fruit*, the *natural branches* as well as the *root*, as the apostle asserts; if the *future* descendants of Abraham and the patriarchs are to be regarded as *holy*, as Mr B. allows, and for which reason they are not to be despised and insulted by the Gentiles; then the *present* Jews are so in the like sense, except we hold that *both ends* of a genealogical chain have an *appropriation* to God, while the *intermediate* links are *unclean*; which is the same thing as to say, that this genealogical chain is at once, and in the same respect, a *conductor* and a *non-conductor* of this relative holiness.

But what is deserving of particular notice is, that there are several *degrees* of relative holiness; and that, in Scripture estimation, a person may be relatively *holy* in one sense, while *unclean* in

* Note on Rom. xi. 16.

another. Accordingly, in a very general sense, *no man* is to be deemed unclean under the gospel dispensation, (Acts x. 28,) but *every man*, whether Jew or Gentile, is deemed *holy; i.e.*, in virtue of the gospel *grant* of mercy and the means of grace to the Gentiles as well as the Jews, *all mankind*, without distinction of nation or tribe, are *appropriated* to God, or pointed out by Him as the intended objects of such a grant. When the command was given to preach the gospel to *every creature*, to propose the means of grace to *all mankind*, they were virtually declared *holy*, and not *dogs*, as before reckoned. The *promise*, or covenant grant, is now not only to the Jews and their children, but to "all that are afar off;" for *all the nations* are as much the *designed* objects of the call as the inhabitants of Judea were when the apostle wrote; and when any are actually among *the called*, that design is in them accomplished. Now, when incorporated with the visible Church, they are termed *holy* in a more particular sense. They are then more particularly appropriated to God, the promise is to them more directly, they are more expressly entitled to all the means of grace and salvation, according to their capacity. And, compared with this degree of relative holiness, those who are *holy* in the former sense are yet *unclean*. Thus an idolater and his family in the one sense,—that is, in reference to any Divine *prohibition*, or any *exclusive* clause in the covenant, promise, or grant of mercy, —are no longer common or unclean, but relatively *holy*. Yet in reference to the *called*, the incorporated members of the visible Church, the same idolater and his family are *not* holy, but *unclean*. The one is *holy*, because he *may partake*, in virtue of a Divine appointment; the other is *more holy*, (and in *comparison* of whom the former is unclean,) because he actually *does partake* of general church-membership and privileges, and therefore baptism.

I say *general* church-membership, to distinguish it from that which belongs to any *particular* congregation, or even denomination of Christians. For though we contend that baptism is the rite of admission into the *universal* Church of Christ, or *general body* of Christians, of which all denominations of Christian people are parts; yet this is perfectly consistent with Congregational worship and discipline, with Dissenting churches, and the Independent form in particular. And this, indeed, the practice of Independents abundantly confirms; for when they admit any into *special* membership, it is immaterial whether the parties were baptized in

Russia or Italy, in Holland or England, in the Establishment or among Dissenters, or by what denomination of Dissenters; it is sufficient, in that respect, that they have been recognised *general* church-members by baptism. The *other* membership is not to constitute them professed Christians, but is intended for the better promoting of their edification, in a manner as near as possible to the intention of the inspired rubric.

§ 53. We now proceed to examine another passage, from whence we may gather in what light the apostles viewed the children of believing or Christian parents; and that is 1 Cor. vii. 14, "For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband: else were your children unclean; but now are they holy." "On the *maturest* and most *impartial* consideration of this text," says Dr Doddridge, "I must judge it to refer to *infant baptism*. Nothing can be more apparent than that the word *holy* signifies persons who *might be admitted* to partake of the *distinguishing rites* of God's people. Compare Exod. xix. 6; Deut. vii. 6, xiv. 2, xxvi. 19, xxxiii. 3; Ezra ix. 2, with Isa. xxxv. 8, lii. 1; Acts x. 28, &c. And as for the interpretation, which *so many* of our brethren the Baptists have contended for, that *holy* signifies *legitimate*, and *unclean illegitimate*, (not to urge that this seems an *unscriptural* sense of the word,) nothing can be more evident than that the argument will by no means bear it."* It was not without reason that the Doctor expressed himself with some limitation respecting the interpretation he opposes, thus, "which *so many* of our brethren the Baptists;" for they are by no means agreed how to compass the wresting of this text from the Pædobaptists. Dr S., for instance, is of opinion "that legitimacy is not here intended."† And thus he assigns his reasons for dissenting herein from some of his brethren: —"If one party's being a believer makes cohabitation lawful, it should seem to follow as a natural consequence, that when neither is a believer, cohabitation is unlawful; which is a proposition no one will maintain. But," says he, "let us examine the question respecting *legitimacy* a little more attentively. The apostle's object in this context was, no doubt, to dissuade those Christians who were married to unbelievers from any thoughts of a separation. And the consideration of their having been lawfully married was most certainly a good argument to enforce such advice; and the rather,

* Fam. Expos. in loc. † Answer to Dr A., p. 3.

as a divorce would be likely to bring dishonour on their offspring in the opinion of those who might not know the true cause of it. But if he meant to urge this argument, it is scarce imaginable he would describe the lawfulness of the marriage contract by the phrase of 'the unbelieving husband's being sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife by the husband,' since the validity of the marriage did not, could not, in the nature of the thing, depend on one party's being a *believer*. Whether he or she were or were not a believer, the marriage would have been good; nor would a separation, upon pretence of their not being of the same faith, have made the children *illegitimate*." * Mr Booth, however, warmly pleads for what Dr Stennett strenuously opposes.

But as the real meaning of the text very much depends on the exact import of certain terms, it will be necessary to pay our principal attention to them; and thence to deduce the apostle's meaning.

First, The terms ἀκάθαρτος and ἅγιος should be ascertained. These "are used here by the apostle in the Jewish sense. The Jews called all that were Jews, *holy;* and all others they called *unclean*. Thus *proles genita* EXTRA *sanctitatem*, was a child begot by parents whilst they were yet heathens; *genita* INTRA *sanctitatem*, was a child begot by parents after they were proselytes. This way of speaking St Paul transfers from the Jewish into the Christian Church, calling *all* that are of the Christian Church *saints*, or holy, by which reason all that were out of it were *unclean*." † The same author elsewhere observes:—"The heathen world had revolted from the true God, to the service of idols and false gods, (Rom. i. 18–25.) The Jews being *separated* from this corrupted mass, to be the *peculiar people* of God, were called *holy*, (Exod. xix. 5, 6; Num. xv. 40.) They being cast off, the professors of Christianity were *separated* to be the people of God, and so became *holy*, (1 Pet. ii. 9, 10.)" ‡ Thus Mr Baxter:—"The common and, I doubt not, true exposition is, that it is meant of a state of *separation to God*, as a peculiar people from the world, as the Church is separated. It is generally agreed, that the *most common* use of the word *holy*, if not the *only*, both in Scripture and profane writers, is to signify *a thing separated* TO GOD; and to *sanctify* any thing is to *separate it* TO GOD. *Omne sanctum*

* Answer to Dr A., p. 85. † Locke's Paraphr. in loc., *note*.
‡ Ibid, chap. i. 2, *note*.

est DEO *sanctum*,—Whatsoever is holy, is holy *to God*. This, therefore, being the *proper* sense and *ordinary* use of the word, I take myself bound to receive it as the meaning here, till I know more reason to the contrary. Now as *holiness* thus signifieth *a separation to God*, so it may be distinguished thus: a person or thing may be holy, or separated to God, either in state and *standing relation*; or else only for some particular *act* or *use*, whether for shorter time or longer."* When contending with his redoubtable antagonist, Mr Tombes, and bearing hard on him by urging the constant use of the word *holy*, he gives him a syllogistic overthrow thus:—"If the constant meaning of the word *holy* be for a *separation to God*, then we must so understand it here, except there be a palpable necessity of understanding it otherwise; but the constant sense of the word *holy* is for a separation to God, and here is no palpable necessity of understanding it otherwise: therefore we must so understand it here."† And here it is observable, that Mr Tombes denied not that the *constant* meaning of the word *holy* was as Mr Baxter said. The latter had also urged, that the sense of the term *holy* for which he pleaded was used in Scripture near SIX HUNDRED TIMES, and the other sense NOWHERE used. "Here," says the keen disputant, conscious of the truth on his side, and somewhat touched with indignation,—and is it to be much wondered at, when his side of the question was illuminated with near *six hundred* rays of evidence, and the other confessedly *all dark*?—"Here Mr Tombes denied not but that the word was taken *so oft* in *my* sense, and *never* in *his*; and yet"—and yet!—"denied the consequence. I do therefore," says the good man, "here require all men that are not of desperate resolutions, and prostituted consciences, to consider faithfully, whether he be likely to make a more comfortable answer before the bar of Christ, who saith, 'Lord, I searched after Thy will in Thy Word as far as I was able, and I durst not rashly venture on my singular fancy, but in my admitting or bringing infants into Thy visible Church, I grounded my judgment and practice on Thy Word, in the same sense as it is used near *six hundred* times in the Scripture,'—I say, will not this man have a better plea than he that shutteth infants out of the Church upon the exposition of Scripture in a sense that it is *never* else used in, but near *six hundred* times otherwise?" Again:—"If the apostle by *holy* should have meant *that they were not bas-*

* Plain Script. Proof, p. 80. † Ibid., p. 82.

tards, then he should have spoke in a phrase which they were unlikely to understand; and so his speech might tend to draw them into mistakes, and not to edify them. For if the word *holy* were *constantly* used (even near six hundred times in the Bible) for a *separation to God*, and NEVER used for legitimacy, (all of which Mr Tombes denieth not,) then what likelihood was there that the apostle should mean it for legitimacy, or the people so understand him? If I should write an epistle to a Christian congregation now, and therein tell them, that their children are all by nature *unholy*, would they ever conjecture that I meant that they were all *bastards?*"*

But here, were we disposed to retort on the use of terms, with what propriety may we ask, "Is *illegitimate* in one case, and *legitimate* in the other, the NATURAL and PRIMARY signification of those Greek words (*ἀκάθαρτος* and *ἅγιος*)? Are these the senses that would naturally *first* occur to the mind of a wise and impartial person, on reading or hearing the apostolic observation?"† The inquisitive and learned Mr Baxter replies—"*Six hundred to one* it is not." And Dr Guyse observes:—"The terms (*ἀκάθαρτος*) 'unclean' and (*ἅγιος*) 'holy' occur almost numberless times in the LXX. and in the New Testament; but I do not find that they are *ever* ONCE used to signify *illegitimate* and *legitimate*, which is the sense that some would here put upon them. And as the apostle was speaking of persons already married, and marriage is a civil ordinance of the God of nature, there was *no room to doubt* whether the children of such unbelieving and believing parents were *legitimate* or not, since *that* depends entirely on the legitimacy of the *marriage*, and not at all on the *religious* character of the husband and wife, whether one, or both, or neither of them, were Christians or no."‡ To this I will add the following remarks of Dr Whitby:—"He doth not say, Else were your children *bastards*, but now they are *legitimate*; but, Else were they *unclean*, *i.e.*, heathen children, not to be owned as an holy seed. That this is the true import of the words *ἀκάθαρτα* and *ἅγια* will be apparent from the Scriptures, in which the heathens are styled *the unclean*, in opposition to the Jews in covenant with God, and, therefore, styled *an holy people*. So Isa. xxxv. 8, *ἀκάθαρτος*, 'the *unclean*, shall not pass over it.' Chap. lii. 1, 'There shall no more come

* Ut supra, p. 83.

† Paedobaptism Examined, p. 322.

‡ Paraphr. in loc., *note*.

unto thee *ἀκάθαρτος*, the *unclean*.' So Acts x. 28, 'God hath shewed me that I should call no man common or *ἀκάθαρτον*, *unclean*.' Whence it is evident, that the Jews looked upon themselves as *δοῦλοι Θεοῦ καθαροὶ*, 'the clean servants of God,' (Neh. ii. 20,) and upon all heathens and their offspring as unclean, by reason of their want of circumcision, the sign of the covenant. Hence, whereas it is said that Joshua *circumcised* the people, (chap. v. 4,) the Septuagint say, *περιεκαθαρεν*, he *cleansed* them. Moreover, of heathen children, and such as are not circumcised, they say, 'They are not born in holiness;' but *they*, on the contrary, are styled *σπέρμα ἅγιον*, 'an holy seed,' (Isa. vi. 13, Ezra ix. 2;) and the offspring from them, and from those proselytes which had embraced their religion, are said to be born *in holiness*, and so thought fit to be admitted to circumcision, or baptism, or whatsoever might initiate them into the Jewish Church. And, therefore, to this sense of the words *holy* and *unclean*, the apostle may be here *most rationally* supposed to allude, declaring that the seed of holy persons, the offspring born *ἐκ τῶν ἁγιασμένων*, *of saints*, as Christians are still called in the New Testament, are also *holy*. (See note on chap. i. 2.) And though one of the parents be still a heathen, yet is the denomination to be taken from the *better*, and so their offspring are to be esteemed not as heathens, *i.e.*, *unclean*, but *holy*, as all Christians by denomination are. So Clemens Alexandrinus (Strom., lib. iii., p. 445, D) infers, saying, 'I suppose the seed of those that are holy is *holy*, according to that saying of the apostle Paul, "The unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband,"' &c. The word used for a *bastard* by this apostle being *νόθος*, (Heb. xii. 8,) and the word *γνήσιος* being the proper word for a *legitimate* offspring, had the apostle *intended* such a sense, [as our opponents plead for,] he would have used the words which in the Greek writers are generally used in that sense, and not such words as in the Septuagint, and in the Jewish language, ALWAYS have a relation to fœderal [or relative] holiness, or the want of it; but NONE AT ALL *to the legitimacy or spuriousness* of the birth."*

These quotations are inserted, not so much to shew what were the *opinions* of these learned writers, (for the general current of expositors runs in the same channel,) but for the sake of the *reasons* and *grounds* by which their interpretation is supported. A gentleman well known to my opponent, on a certain occasion borrows

* Comment. in loc.

the following passage, which, because it is common property, I here insert:—"We are not to forsake the *genuine* and *natural* signification of words, unless there be the HIGHEST EVIDENCE that the author did otherwise intend them, saith the Civil Law. And as Augustine says, the proper signification of words is always to be retained, unless NECESSITY enforce us to expound them otherwise. What better evidence can we have of the sense of a place than that, had an author *intended* such a meaning, he could have used no plainer expression to declare it?" *

But says Mr B., "Whatever the apostle intends by the word *holy*, as here applied to children one of whose parents is a believer, it is not confined to the *infants* of such persons, but belongs to *all* their offspring, whether younger or older, whether born *before* the conversion of either parent, or after that happy event had taken place; for the *children*, without any distinction, are pronounced holy." † And what then? Does the aspect of the gospel dispensation, or God's *grant* of mercy to the heathen, who were not *a people*, appear *less* amiable because it smiles on *all* the children of a Christian, and not on some only? Or what inconvenience is there in allowing, what impropriety in maintaining, that the relative holiness for which we plead, while granted to the parent, should be also granted to *all his?* But will not this be the fearful consequence? "If it be lawful to baptize them on the ground of this holiness while infants, it must be equally so when grown up." ‡ Very true; and what harm can this blunted arrow do? Is not this the very thing we plead for, provided you grant that this reasonable postulate should be taken into the account—viz., That whatever *right* an adult has, in virtue of a Divine *grant*, to any religious privileges, Christianity will justify no *compulsive* measures for the purpose of intruding on him these privileges against his good-will and liking. Christianity does not annihilate, nay, in this instance, does not suspend, the *natural rights* of parents and children. And what can be more plain than this, that the natural authoritative right of parents over their children for their good is in a great degree absolute while *infants*, and that *in proportion* as they grow up to reason and manhood this authoritative right is *lessened?* Nor is there any more difficulty in ascertaining these degrees, than in transacting the common

* Pædobaptism Examined, p. 324; from Ferguson's Interest of Reason in Religion, pp. 328, 333, 334, 462. † Pædobaptism Examined, p. 389. ‡ Ibid.

concerns of life where any degree of wisdom and prudence are required. At least, a Christian minister could not, in the nature of the thing, be more at a loss how to act in this case, than in determining the *degrees* of teaching and the kind of profession requisite in adults. We will suppose, therefore, that God, by His apostle, pronounces *the children* of a Christian, without exception, *holy;* and let us further suppose some of them are *infants,* and others *grown up.* If God pronounce them *holy,*—that is, direct His grant of mercy to them, declaring *the promise* is to them, and that they are all alike, in common with their parents, welcome to His visible Church,—it is manifest there lies no objectionable ground to their baptism, but their own *dissent* from the Christian connexion, their perverse *opposition* to its humbling doctrines and holy laws. Are they *compliable?* willing to enter into the school, that is, the Church of Christ? or, in other words, do they believe with all the heart that Jesus Christ is the true Messiah? Who can *forbid* water? On the other hand, do they *oppose?* are they unwilling to enter the school, to embrace its doctrines, and to be governed by its laws? Who has power to *constrain?* For, in the nature of the case, in proportion as the opposition is criminal or morally evil, the authority of the parent is weakened.

It is again objected, "That *holiness* of which the inspired author speaks, is not inferred from the *faith* of the believing parent, but from the *sanctification* of the unbelieving party *by* or *to* the believer."* But does not this involve a contradiction? For surely if the sanctification of the unbelieving party is *by* the believer, as such, it must be inferred from his *faith.* And again, if the sanctification be *by* the believer, how can it be *to* him? Are not the two renderings of the preposition ἐν, *by* and *to,* of which the objector gives us our choice, essentially different and contradictory? If we say *to* him, the effect, sanctification, must be caused by another, that it may terminate on him. But if we say *by* him, he must be the cause, that the effect may terminate on another. This diversity of rendering, and the importance of the term *sanctified,* make it necessary that we should—

§ 54. Second, Attempt to ascertain the import of the phrase ἡγίασται γὰρ, κ. τ. λ. "On this term *sanctified,*" says Mr B., "the inspired writer manifestly lays a peculiar emphasis,—*such* an emphasis, that it seems to be the governing word of the whole

* Pædobaptism Examined, p. 389.

sentence, and a *key* to its true meaning; for it is twice mentioned as containing the *grand reason* why the believing party should neither desert nor divorce the unconverted companion, and also as expressing *the ground* of that holiness which is ascribed to their children."* This, then, being the *key* to unlock the text and discover its contents, let us examine the *wards,* and see whether they fit Mr B.'s interpretation. "Bengelius," says our author, "considers the holiness of the *children* and of the *unbelieving* parent as *the same;* because ἡγίασται and ἅγιά ἐστιν differ only as to be *made holy* from to *be holy.*" On which he reflects, "If, then, that sanctification of the unbelieving husband gives him no claim to baptism, the holiness thence arising cannot invest his *children* with such a right."† This our author seems to consider as an insurmountable objection. And in the same light we suppose Dr S. views it:—"Now I readily admit," says he, "that the children of believers, or of parents one of whom only is a believer, are here styled *holy.* But then I insist that such children are in no other sense *holy* than is the unbelieving parent also. For the apostle as expressly asserts that the unbelieving husband is sanctified or made holy (ἡγίασται) by the wife, and the unbelieving wife sanctified or made holy by the husband, as that the children of such parents are holy, (ἅγιά.) And, thus considered, it will follow that if the holiness of the children, whatever be the sense of the word here, is to be admitted as a proof that they are included in the Christian covenant, the holiness of the unbelieving parent is to be admitted as a proof that such parent is included in the Christian covenant also. And if upon this ground the former have a right to the positive institutions of Christ, upon the same ground the latter has also."‡ But this objection has been sufficiently replied to, virtually, in the last section, when treating of *adult* children, who are relatively *holy,* though unbelievers or opposers to the Christian faith. And were we to grant, according to our opponents' wishes, that the children are holy in no higher sense than the *unbelieving* parent is, it would still follow, on the principle already stated, that the *children* ought to be baptized, but not the parent. The one and the others have the grant of a privilege, the covenant and its initiatory seal; and the believing parent has a Divine right and rubric for having the seal

* Pædobaptism Examined, p. 402. † Ibid., p. 384.
‡ Answer to Dr A., pp. 81, 82.

applied to the *children*, who are at his disposal for their good, and who do not *oppose* the faith; but this cannot extend to the *unbelieving* partner, his unbelief counteracting his relative sanctification.

Thus we may observe these two respectable authors, though widely differing in their interpretations of the text, are equally confident that *relative holiness*, which entitles to Christian ordinances, is not intended. "It may be difficult," says Dr S., "to fix his [the apostle's] precise meaning; but if we will make reason, Scripture, and fact our guide, it cannot be difficult to determine upon some of the senses given, that they are not his meaning. Personal *internal holiness*, for instance, cannot be here intended."* In *this* decision, I believe the generality of Pædobaptists will readily concur, though some divines have pleaded for *real* holiness, as here ascribed to the *children*, and particularly Dr Thomas Goodwin.† On this head Mr B. is sufficiently explicit:—"Neither have we any reason to think that the children of believers are denominated holy in reference to *internal sanctification*."‡ What, then, does this gentleman think was the *holiness* referred to, whereby the unbelieving party was *sanctified* by the believer? That which you have seen confuted by Dr Stennett in the last section—*marriage!* Take his own words:—"The public and voluntary act of taking the woman for a wife, and the man for a husband. By this transaction, according to the legal custom of their country, they mutually *gave up*, or *set apart*, themselves one to another."§ Well, reader, what say you to this? Here is—*one infidel* SANCTIFYING *another!* Or, if you had rather, *each infidel* SANCTIFYING *himself!*

If ἡγίασται signify no more than *to be married*, or to be *given up* in marriage, the one party to the other, it had no influence to satisfy their scruples. For the Israelites, who had married idolatrous wives, could say the same; yet it was no sufficient plea that one of them had been ἡγίασται, in Mr B.'s sense, *set apart* to the other. The question would still return, How shall I know that this party that has been *given up* to me is not to be discarded or put away, as in Ezra x. 3, &c.? If our author's explanation be admitted, it is to make the apostle to solve a case of conscience in a manner totally unworthy of him, for he must do it by asserting

* Answer to Dr A., pp. 81, 82.
† Works, vol. ii., p. 400, &c.
‡ Pædobaptism Examined, p. 392.
§ Ibid., p. 400.

a *fact*, that they were once married, of which they were as well assured before it was asserted, while he says nothing of the *lawfulness* of that fact, which could be the only ground of scruple. The doubts of these Corinthian querists were raised by reflecting on the *quality* of the relation contracted, and not the *fact;* whereas the apostle, if our author be right, solves the difficulty by passing by the *quality*, and asserting the fact,—that is to say, by saying something wide of the point, but nothing at all to the purpose. Whereas, had it been his design to prove the *validity* of their marriage, would he not naturally have done it by suggesting some middle term or consideration, besides barely referring them to the fact? Was it not necessary for them that they should be certified of the *lawfulness* and *propriety* of their marriage relation? On Mr B.'s hypothesis this *is not* done; on ours, *fully*. If the question be proposed to him, Why should the believer cohabit with the unbeliever? he must reply, Because they were formerly married. Or rather, Not because you, believer, have been devoted to your partner, and are bound to fulfil your engagement, but because your infidel partner has formerly given himself to you. But was this a remedy suited to the disease? Or should it be said, This is a satisfactory consideration why the parties should continue, not merely because there has been a mutual *dedication*, but because there has been a Divine appointment of marriage as the basis of it? But the duty of marriage was from the beginning; yet those in the time of Ezra were obliged to put off each man his wife, to which nevertheless he had been *wedded*. Nor is it available to say, that those in Ezra offended against a *positive* Divine law, but not these; for that is the very point in which they desire satisfaction—viz., whether the Christian law does or does not require a *separation?* His answer is not, The law of nature is binding, and Christianity has nothing against it. This would have been his idea if *nothing more* was intended than the *validity* of marriage. But he says more: The unbeliever *has been* (from the moment of the partner's conversion to Christianity) or, by an enallage of time, *is*, made holy or sanctified by the believer, in virtue of a *Divine grant*, which Divine grant is much in favour of infants. The grant of the parents' covenant and its seals being always intended for them and their children, according to their capacity, be it known, as if Paul had said, That though God hath been displeased with mixed marriages, and though

He still says, "Be not unequally yoked with unbelievers," yet the idolatry and unbelief, that is, the heathenism, of the one parent, shall be no prejudice to their children. They are not debarred from any privileges given by Divine grant to other children *both* whose parents are Christians. The faith, or Christianity, of the one shall avail more to insure those privileges, than the unbelief of the other to prevent them.

This is a medium of proof calculated to satisfy their scruples. To the pure, all things are pure; the unbelief of your partner shall not pass over to you, as if you were involved in his unbelief and guilt, or as if the precept, "Touch not, taste not, handle not," affected you. God will graciously deal with *you and your children* without any reference to your partner's unbelief. He shall stand or fall alone; his obstinacy shall be *personal*, centring in himself; but, *mercy* herein *rejoicing against judgment*, the promise is *to you*, Christian party, and to your children, though your partner oppose. Nature dictates that a *father*, who is king in his own family, should exercise his authority to the benefit of all his domestics; but by a *gracious express appointment*, the children common to both shall be deemed *holy*, on account of the *mother* as well as the father, so as to be treated as if both parents believed. The seed of mixed marriages were not deemed *holy*, (Ezra ix. 2, Neh. ix. 2,) it might be objected. True, says the apostle, and to answer your scruples I am authorised to say, That under *this* dispensation there is the difference I have mentioned; and let this quiet your minds. Your continuance together, rather than those you refer to, is owing to a *special grant* in your favour, as more agreeable to this dispensation. God does not now insist on a divorce as He did heretofore, for wise reasons, and among others, because He designs hereby *more speedily to Christianise all nations*. For if the unbelief of one party were sufficient to denominate and regard their common offspring in the class of heathens rather than Christians, how slow must be the progress of Christianity! but now, if one believes in the Messiah, all the family is Christian, and is treated accordingly. Otherwise, were not this God's plan and our practice, your children and the whole family but yourself must be deemed *unclean*, or *heathenish*, and visibly related to Satan's interest. But as an unbelieving son, daughter, or servant, is not sufficient to class the family of which either is a

part among heathen families, so neither shall the unbelief of your partner, even a husband, have that influence.

Again; if my opponent be right, "the epithet *unbelieving*," as Beza well observes, "would be quite superfluous, as also the *implied* epithet *believing*—*believing* wife, and *believing* husband."* "For we should consider, what is the subject-matter in dispute—namely, Whether matrimony contracted between two persons, one an infidel and the other a believer, is holy, and for that cause the believer is bound to continue in it? Were it not so, why should Paul, in the other member, add the epithet *unbelieving?* Nor can any one truly say that the marriage between two infidels is *holy*, and that their *children* are *holy*. I grant that the marriage of infidels is valid in a civil sense, nor is their matrimonial commerce to be regarded *coram Deo pro scortatione*. But what has this to do with Paul's design, who treats of a case of conscience, or a religious scruple?"† The *unbelieving* husband is sanctified by the *believing* wife, and *vice versâ*. Whereas, if Mr B.'s hypothesis be true, the *sanctification* was neither *by* nor *to* the believer, as a *believer*, but was possessed of it while an infidel. But if the *sanctification* does not respect the party *as believing*, it seems inserted for no other use than to mislead us. If the apostle only meant simply, "You have been *married*," or, "You have been *devoted* to each other by marriage," why introduce and *interchange* the expressions and ideas — "the *unbelieving* by the *believing* party?" Mr B. seems to be aware of this objection, and observes, "The *believer only* could entertain a doubt concerning the *lawfulness* of cohabiting with an unbeliever." Very well; but the question still returns, If the apostle meant, as our author would have it, that the unconcerned party was *married* to the *scrupulous;* is it not reasonable to suppose that the idea would be *differently* expressed? Is it not confessedly an *unprecedented mode* of

* "*In uxore*, ἐν τῇ γυναικὶ, Vulg. *Per mulierem* FIDELEM, ἐν τῇ γυναικὶ πιστῇ: quam lectionem in Claromontano et alio præterea manuscripto Græco codice invenimus; et rursum paulo post ἐν τῷ ἀνδρῳ πιστῳ, *per virum fidelem*. Augustinus lib. i. quo exponit sermonem in monte habitum, legit, *In fratre fideli*, ἐν ἀδελφῳ τῳ πιστῳ. Vetus autem interpres habit, *Per mulierem fidelem*, et, *per virum fidelem;* et nos in uno VETUSTO CODICE reperimus ad marginem annotatum πιστῇ priore loco, et πιστῳ posteriore. Claromontanus autem codex habet, ἐν ἀνδρι ἀδελφῳ, *In viro fratre*, id est, qui sit frater sive fidelis. Et *certe* etiamsi hæc epitheta non addas, tamen NECESSARIO *subaudiena sunt*."—*Beza* in loc.

† Beza, ut supra.

expressing a *common idea?* Whereas, if he intended to shew that the Christianity of the one party was more prevalent, in virtue of the more merciful and extensive grant of God, and the genius of the gospel dispensation, towards classing the children among the Christians, than the *infidelity* of the other party towards classing them among *idolaters* — what expressions could he use better adapted to express the sentiment?

Moreover; be it observed, that the very existence of the other opinion depends on rendering the preposition *ἐν*, TO; which rendering ought not to be adopted without manifest necessity, if on any consideration whatever, in that sense of *to* which denotes a *dative* case. It is well known that the most common acceptations of *ἐν* are *in, by, among, with,* and sometimes it is used for *because of, for,* or *for the sake of, by reason of;* and the like.* "EN imports the *state* and *disposition,* the *abode* and *situation—habitum et situm,* says Vergara; corresponding to the Latin *in.*" † And "it commonly marks the term of rest, or the state in which a thing is; wherefore it *only* governs an *ablative.*" ‡ But what has Mr B. to say in vindication of his rendering? "The unbelieving husband is sanctified TO the wife. *So* Dr Doddridge and others render the particle *ἐν*; and I think more properly in *this* passage than in our common version. *So* the preposition is translated in the very next verse; as also in Luke i. 17, 1 Thess. iv. 7, and six or seven times over in 2 Peter i. 5–7." § But *why* is the rendering *to* more proper in *this* passage than in our common version? This answer we have still to learn. We hear a language somewhat different whenever it is found in connexion with *water,* and especially a *river.* Thus, we may be sure, were we to meet with *ἐν ποταμῳ* in connexion with baptism, it would be IN, and not *at* or *by* the *river.* However, let us a little more narrowly inspect the authorities produced, and I am very much mistaken if *any one* of

* "Ἐν *τῇ γυναικί*, by the wife; *uxoris gratia,* BECAUSE of the wife; *i. e.,* he is to be reputed as sanctified, because he is one flesh with her who is holy. So 'Israel served (*ἐν γυναικί*) for a wife, and (*ἐν γυναικί*) for a wife he kept sheep,' (Hos. xii. 12.) 'I desire that you faint not (*ἐ ταῖς θλίψεσί μου*) *by reason of* my tribulations,' (Eph. iii. 13;) and, 'that no man be shaken (*ἐν ταῖς θλίψεσί ταυταις*) *by reason of* my tribulations.' See Naldius in the 23d signification of the particle Beth."—*Whitby* in loc.

† Messieurs de Port Royal's New Method, p. 195.

‡ Ibid., p. 334, and their Greek Primitives, by Nugent, p. 297.

§ Pædobaptism Examined, p. 395.

these instances answer the purpose for which they are adduced; for if they do not answer the idea of a *dative*, which implies that something is GIVEN to the object, they are useless. And I believe the best critics and masters of the Greek language unanimously maintain that the preposition ἐν never conveys that idea.* The *dative* case is so called, "quia per eum alicui aliquid nos dare demonstramus." † This the particle in question *never* signifies, any more than the Latin *in;* and yet without that use of it Mr B.'s interpretation is a baseless fabric.

We are referred to "the very next verse" following the controverted text, (1 Cor. vii. 15,) "God hath called us (ἐν εἰρήνῃ) *to* peace," according to our version; whereas Dr Hammond justly observes, "It is not *to* as the note of a *dative* case, but UNTO *peace*, as ἐν is taken for εἰς." ‡ Again we are referred to Luke i. 17, "To turn . . . . the disobedient TO the wisdom of the just." But this is by no means the sign of a *dative*. There is nothing *given to* wisdom. "Elsner would render it," as Dr Doddridge observes, "'By *the wisdom of the just.*'" § And thus Sir Norton Knatchbull: —"*Et infideles instruat* IN *sapientia justorum.*" ‖ And so other literal versions:—"IN *prudentiam justorum.*" ¶ "AD *scientiam rectorum.*" ** "AD *scientiam justorum.*" †† "AD *prudentiam justorum.*" ‡‡ "*Ad intelligentiam justorum,*" §§ &c. In like manner, 1 Thess. iv. 7, "For God hath not called us unto (ἐπὶ) uncleanness, but (ἐν ἁγιασμῷ) *unto* holiness." That is, in the phrase of Dr Doddridge, "to the love and practice of universal holiness." But what has this to do with *giving to* a recipient? As to 2 Pet. i. 5–7, it seems still less to his purpose: "Add to your faith

* "'Εν τῇ γυναικὶ, *by* or *through* the wife. This the preposition ἐν so ordinarily signifies, that it cannot need to be further testified, (and in this notion it is that we here take it;) whereas the notion, which by opposers is here affixt to it, that it should signify *to*, (that *to* which is a sign of the *dative* case,) is never once found to belong to it in the New Testament, nor *can*, with any tolerable *congruity* or *grammatical analogy*, be affixt to it. All the places that are produced for this sense are commonly mistaken. And so still the rendering it *to the wife* [in the *dative* sense] will be without any one example, and the turning it into quite *another* phrase, as if it were γυναικὶ without ἐν; which to do without any *necessity* or *reason*, save only to serve the opposer's turn upon the place, and support his false opinion, must needs be very unreasonable."—*Hammond's Six Quer.*, q. iv., § 32.

† Littleton, sub voce *dativus.* ‡ Dr Hammond, ut supra.
§ Fam. Expos. in loc. ‖ Animadver. in loc. ¶ Montan.
** Syr. Interpret. †† Arab. Interpret. ‡‡ Vulg. §§ Ethiop. Interpret.

virtue, and to virtue knowledge," &c.;—*Ἐπιχορηγήσατε ἐν τῇ πίστει ὑμῶν τὴν ἀρετὴν, ἐν δὲ τῇ ἀρετῇ τὴν γνῶσιν*, &c.; *i.e.*, "Bring forward, *with* your faith, virtue; and, *with* virtue, knowledge." "The word *ἐπιχορηγήσατε* properly signifies to *lead up*, as in a dance, one of these virtues after another in a beautiful and majestic order." * "Respexisse videtur apostolus ad antiquum morem ducendi *choros;* vox enim *ἐπιχορήγειν* proprie significat *chorum ducere.*" † Accordingly the same author renders the passage, "Jungite invicem *cum* fide virtutem, *cum* virtute scientiam," &c. I repeat the question, What has this to do with *giving to* a recipient? Or what similarity has it to Mr B.'s *dative* sense? Who knows not that the article *to* has *various* acceptations, beside what Mr B. would force upon it? For instance, we say, *appointing to* an office, *going to* a place, *calling to* enjoy, *turning to* wisdom, &c., yet such an acceptation of the particle *to* will not serve him.

Nor will Dr Doddridge's version answer his purpose in sense, though in sound. For though he renders *ἡγίασται ἐν*, *sanctified to*, yet the particle has not the *dative* signification. He evidently gives the original particle the acceptation of the Greek *εἰς*, or Latin *in*, signifying *towards, in respect of, for*, &c. It is but fair the Doctor should explain himself:—"*For* in such a case as this, *the unbelieving husband is* so *sanctified to* the wife, [*in uxorem,*] *and the unbelieving wife is* so *sanctified to the husband,* [*in maritem,*] that their matrimonial converse is as lawful AS IF THEY WERE BOTH OF THE SAME FAITH. *Otherwise their children* in these mixed cases *were unclean,* and must be looked upon as unfit to be admitted to those peculiar ordinances by which the seed of God's people are distinguished; *but now they are* confessedly *holy,* and are as readily admitted to baptism, in all our churches, as if BOTH the parents were Christians; so that the case, you see, is in effect decided by this prevailing practice."‡ In a *note* the Doctor opposes the idea of legitimacy, by shewing "that the argument will by no means bear it." But is it not surprising that persons of discernment, that Mr Booth in particular, should suppose this rendering, *sanctified to,* gives the least countenance to his *dative* notion? Is this anything better than a play upon the various acceptations of an English particle? Is it not taking, or attempting to take, an advantage of sound against

* Doddr. Fam. Expos. in loc. † Sir Norton Knatchbull, ut supra.
‡ Fam. Expos. in loc.

sense? And is it not still more surprising that Dr S. should express himself thus:—"Indeed Dr Doddridge, to whose character for learning, candour, and piety, I pay great deference, has so expressed himself in his *paraphrase* on this passage, as *very naturally to convey this idea*, [of legitimacy,] though in his note he opposes the sentiment. How to reconcile him with himself I am at a loss."* *The paraphrase very naturally conveys this idea.* And I am quite at a loss to know by what medium the Doctor views it. Whereas it appears to me "very naturally to convey the *contrary* idea." Does it not evidently resolve the *lawfulness* of matrimonial converse, in such a mixed case, to a *Divine grant*, declaration, and appointment; that is, to the party's being *so sanctified*, in virtue of a gracious privilege conferred under the gospel, *as if they were both of the* SAME FAITH? And does not this clearly imply, that what *sanctified* the unbeliever was (not his *giving* himself *to* the other in marriage, but) God's favourable *appointment* in such a case? Had they been of the *same faith*, no scruple could have existed; the PRIVILEGE therefore consists in the *opposing* party's being *so sanctified* for the use of the other, *as if both believed* alike; otherwise, their having "mutually *given up*, or *set apart* themselves one to another," would have been no security against a *divorce*, which was the point in question, if the Lord were equally strict against infidel and idolatrous connexions under the present, as He was under the preceding economy, (Deut. vii. 3, 4, &c.:) and the PRIVILEGE moreover is expressly extended to the *children;* which would have been reckoned (according to Ezra ix. 2, Neh. ix. 2) not among the relatively *holy* seed in such a mixed case. Such a grant of special privileges, therefore, the text and the paraphrase imply; and *nothing short* of this could tend to satisfy the scrupulous querist.

But though Dr Doddridge appears to me perfectly consistent with himself while he opposes the idea of *legitimacy*, yet I cannot help thinking but he is more reserved than he had need to be, if he meant to confine the *sanctification* to the matrimonial converse. For, though we should allow that the *sanctification* of the unbelieving partner and of the children is *the same;* and that the terms *sanctified* and *holy* imply a qualification, as far as a Divine grant can qualify, or a declarative permission and liberty "to partake of the distinguishing rites of God's people;" yet, as

* Answer to Dr A., p. 83.

before shewn, the *opposer* of the gospel should not be *forced*, for violent measures are no weapons of the gospel, and should not be employed in its propagation, or in administering its initiatory seal. To which we may add, that such an opposing infidel or idolater, being an *avowed enemy* to the Head of the Church, does not possess a subjective *suitableness* to enter upon a visible relation to Him and His subjects. He may, therefore, possess a *right*, in virtue of his relative sanctification or holiness, a right founded on a Divine grant, and yet no minister has a right, or lawful authority, to *impose* upon him what he *rejects*, however beneficial it might be to him if accepted. But this is only a *circumstance*, that takes its rise solely in adults from the perverse exercise of human liberty, the sacred rights of conscience in religious matters, and a subjective unsuitableness to answer the design of the ordinance. The *sanctified* unbeliever is *entitled* to the covenant and its seal unconditionally; which *title* he derives, independent of his choice, from his relation to his Christian partner, and as the gift of God; but the actual *application* of the external privilege ministerially is suspended on a *condition*—viz., his accepting of it in a manner suitable to his condition and circumstances. On the contrary, supposing the children to be *holy* only in the same sense, still the rule holds, that infant ones ought to be baptized, because they are capable subjects, and have not forfeited the grant, nor failed in any *condition* required of them.

It may not be improper to remark, that, notwithstanding we have, for argument's sake, admitted Mr B.'s idea of *sameness* in having been *sanctified* and being *holy*, there seems to be a *difference;* as if the apostle intended to shew that the unbelieving partner was sanctified, not *merely* for his own sake, but as also having a *further* influence on the children, and without which they would have been *unclean*. The influence of the unbelief and heathenism of the one party, as if he had said, is annihilated by the counter-influence of the other party's faith or Christianity, with respect to their offspring. The faith of the one party, by the merciful tenor of the gospel dispensation, is more efficacious towards classing the children among the Christians than the unbelief of the other towards classing them among heathens. The unbeliever is *sanctified,—i.e.,* his professed unbelief is *overpowered by the professed holiness* of the other, in reference to their respective influence upon their children, which were to be ranked either

among heathens or Christians. But as to the *children,* their holiness appears in stronger and more expressive terms, alluding, it should seem, to a well-known *fact* that they were treated as *holy,* were deemed members of the Christian Church, and made partakers of its privileges according to their capacity. *Ἐπεὶ ἄρα,* "*Otherwise* were your children unclean, (*νῦν δὲ,*) *but now* are they holy." "Nam particula *νῦν* hoc in loco," says Beza, "non est temporis adverbium, sed est conjunctio quæ adhiberi solet in argumentorum assumptionibus, ut alibi ostendimus."* Therefore the phrase *νῦν δὲ ἁγιά ἐστιν* is tantamount to *sancti sunt autem.*

Thus we see that the interpretation for which Mr B. contends is in every view indefensible. It directly tends to make the apostle Paul, with all his superior abilities and supernatural endowments, an unskilful casuist, a very abstruse, if not an inconclusive reasoner, and a blunderer in the language in which he wrote. Whereas ours regards him, as indeed he was, a skilful casuist, a masterly reasoner, and a good writer.

But we must not quit this subject without attending for a few moments to Dr S.'s compromising plan. Having discarded the intention of personal internal holiness, legitimacy, &c., from the text, he observes:—"If Mr A. will but give up his general proposition [that the children of pious parents are included with them in the Christian covenant] in those exceptionable senses of it to which I have all along objected, we shall perhaps be able to *compromise* the matter upon this text without much difficulty. I agree, then, that there is a sense in which every good man may be said to SANCTIFY *his wife and his children.* He DEVOTES them by faith and

* Annot. in loc.—The following exposition of this part of the text, and the reflections, by a masterly critic, are worthy of insertion here:—"*Ἐπεὶ ἄρα, Alioquin* [nisi parentum alteruter esset fidelis] *liberi vestri essent immundi,* i. e., manerent Ethnici: *νῦν δὲ, nunc vero* [quonium parentum alter est fidelis] *ἁγιά ἐστιν, sancti sunt,* i. e., reputantur membra Ecclesiæ Christianæ. Et in hac notione credo apostolum sæpius usurpare vocem *ἅγιος,* ut in initio hujus epistolæ, &c. Ecclesia enim et sancti sunt sæpius apud Apostolum Synonyma, ut apparet etiam alibi, manifestissime vero 2 Cor. i. 1, &c. Non quod omnes, qui essent in ecclesia Corinthi vel Ephesi, erant revera sancti, sed quia membra erant visibilia ecclesiæ, ideo vocabantur *sancti,* et ob eam causam liberi eorum ex alterutro parente fideli, qui fuit vocatus sanctus, participes facti sunt BAPTISMI, quomodo filius proselytæ factus est particeps circumcisionis, etiam infans octiduanus. Et si liberi eorum qui vocantur *sancti,* cum sint etiam ipsi *sancti,* non capaces sint baptismi, in quo præcellunt *sancti* immundis? quid inde habent commodi, eo quod vocentur vel reputentur *sancti?*"—*Animadv. in loc. a Nortono Knatchbull.*

prayer to God; he *separates* them, as far as his influence reaches, to the fear and service of heaven. Thus Job is said to have *sanctified* his children, (chap. i. 5.)" * But instead of *compromising* the matter, the Doctor seems to me to *give up* the point. And one would think he is apprehensive of it himself; for, after having endeavoured to support his notion by a full paraphrase, he observes:—"This paraphrase may perhaps not satisfy, nor do I lay any great stress upon it." † But seeing this notion is hardly expected to give satisfaction, he flies to the *dernier ressort* of Antipædobaptists; I mean their peculiar notion about *positive institutions*:—"Could it be proved that the children of Christian parents are included with them in the Christian covenant, and on that account *holy*, it would not follow that therefore they should be baptized: their right to baptism must depend, and depend alone, upon the direct express command of the Institutor; for it is *absurd* to talk of *analogy* and *consequence* in the matter of positive institution." ‡ And yet *this* fort is untenable; yes, I am bold to affirm, it is a vain and useless refuge in the present cause. (See Chap. I.) If the reasoning contained in the preceding pages be just, I say it again, "Instead of compromising the matter, the point is *given up*." For if every good man, as priest in his own house, may SANCTIFY *his wife and children*, may DEVOTE them *by faith* and prayer to God, and SEPARATE them to the fear and service of heaven,—if those who are thus treated may be termed *holy*, and are so termed by the apostle, as the Doctor supposes,—the very nature of the case shews that the *holiness* spoken of is *relative;* and the nature and design of Christian baptism shew that he may with *equal* propriety *set apart* all of them, *as* HIS, for that ordinance; and it appears from what has been said, that none in such family should be left unbaptized, except those who *reject* the counsel of God, or are manifestly *disaffected* to the Christian Church and its Divine Founder.

§ 55. From what has been said in this chapter we may draw the following obvious corollaries:—

First Coroll.—Those *principles* whereby infant children are debarred from their parents' privileges, from a visible standing in the Church of Christ, and particularly from baptism, which is itself a privilege, and the only introductory rite to that visible standing

* Answer to Dr A., p. 87. † Ibid., p. 89. ‡ Ibid.

among God's people, are *unreasonable, unscriptural,* and highly *uncharitable.*

(1.) *Unreasonable.*—Because "infants are *capable* of the OBLIGATIONS of baptism; for the *obligation* ariseth from the EQUITY *of the thing,* not from the understanding and capacity of the person." * And "if we consider baptism as an ordinance of *dedication,* it is the indispensable duty of believers to devote themselves and *all they have* to God; which is *founded in the law of nature,* and is the result of God's right to us *and ours.*" And if it be objected, "Since infants cannot *devote themselves* to God in this ordinance, therefore it is not to be applied to them; to this it may be replied, that as there is no other *medium* which can be made use of to prove that the solemn act of consecration, or dedication to God in baptism, is to be made *only* by ourselves, but what is taken from a supposition of the matter in controversy, by those who assert that infants are not to be baptized: so if this method of reasoning be allowed of, we might as well say, on the other hand, infants are to be baptized; therefore baptism is not an ordinance of self-dedication, since they cannot devote themselves to God; and that would militate against what is allowed of by all, that baptism, when applied to the adult, is an ordinance of self-dedication. When I do, as it were, pass over my right to another, there is nothing required in order hereunto but that I can lawfully do it, considering it as *my property;* and this is no less to be doubted concerning the *infant seed* of believers than I can question whether an adult person has a right to *himself* when he gives up himself to God in this ordinance. And from hence it may be inferred, that infants descending from parents, either both, or but one of them professing faith in Christ, are to be baptized; since *one* parent has as much a right to the child as the *other.*" † To these reflections of the judicious Dr Ridgley, I will add the following from the justly-celebrated Dr Owen:—"All children in their infancy are reckoned unto the covenant of their parents, by virtue of *the law of their creation.* Those who by God's appointment, and by virtue of the law of their creation, are and *must of necessity* be included in the covenant of their parents, have the same right with them unto the privileges of that covenant, no *express*

* Poole's Annot. on Matt. xxviii. 19.

† Ridgley's Body of Div., vol. ii., pp. 408, 409.

exception being put in against them. This right it is in the power of none to deprive them of, *unless they can change the law of their creation.*" * To attempt which it is hardly necessary to remark, that it is sufficiently *unreasonable.*

(2.) *Unscriptural.*—In addition to what has been said on the various dispensations of the covenant of grace, or the grant of mercy to men, the declarations of prophecy, and the records of the New Testament; let the following remarks from the author last referred to be impartially weighed:—"Believers under the New Testament have lost nothing, no privilege that was enjoyed by them under the Old. Many things they have *gained,* and those of unspeakable excellency, but they have lost nothing at all. Whatever they had of *privilege* in any ordinance, that is continued; and whatever was of *burden* or bondage, that is taken away: all that they had of old was on this account, that they were the *people of God.* Into this great *fountain-privilege* believers under the gospel have now succeeded. This I suppose is unquestionable, that God making them to be *His people* who were *not a people,* would not cut them short of any privilege which belonged before to *His people* as such. Let men but give *one instance* to this purpose, and not beg the matter in question, and it shall suffice. And is it possible that any man should be a loser by the *coming of Christ,* or by his *own coming* unto Christ? It is against the whole gospel once to imagine it in the least instance. Let it now be inquired whether it were not a great *privilege* of the *people of God* of old, that their *infant seed* were taken into covenant with them, and were made partakers of the *initial seal* thereof? Doubtless it was the greatest they enjoyed, next to the grace they received for the saving of their own souls. Without this, whatever they were, they were not *a people.* Believers † under the gospel are, as we have spoken, the *people of God;* and that with all sorts of advantages annexed unto that condition, above what were enjoyed by them who of old were so. How is it then that this *people of God,* made so by Jesus Christ in the gospel, should have their *charter* upon its *renewal razed* with a deprivation of one of their choicest rights and privileges? Assuredly it is not so. And,

* Tract of Inf. Bapt. ap. Collect. of Serm., p. 577.

† Understand by *believers* and the *people of God,* CHRISTIANS,—that is, those who are such by *denomination;* which remarks are still more forcible with respect to the truly pious.

therefore, if believers are now, as the apostle says they are, the *people of God*, (Heb. iv. 9,) their children have a right to the *initial seal* of the covenant." *

(3.) *Uncharitable.*—Is it not uncharitable (to say nothing worse) to conclude that all the infants in the Christian world are as unqualified for a visible membership in the Church of God as the most hardened infidel? Nay, much further from the gospel kingdom; since the latter *may* come to be a member in a few days, while the former *must*, on this plan, be shut out for years, and this exclusion must continue for ever if the party do not *submit* to such terms of communion as nine godly persons out of ten judge and sincerely believe are *unreasonable* and *unscriptural*—viz., a *renunciation* of the baptism and church-membership of infants, and of every mode of receiving and administering the ordinance, except a total immersion of the body. Our opponents, indeed, extend their charity as far as we could wish to *dying* infants, while they are so sparing of it to the *living*. The dying are numbered with the *saints;* the living, as to church-relation and privileges, are classed with *infidels*. And is it not strange to astonishment, that the *excellency* and *spirituality* of the gospel dispensation should be considered as an argument by men of sense for excluding infants from a visible relation to Christ and His people! But if this be a just plea of exclusion, why so freely allow them a standing in a state far *more* excellent and spiritual? How can these things hang together? Does it not involve an *absurdity*, as well as uncharitableness, to say that a person may be very well admitted to heaven *without* believing and repenting, but not to be a member of the visible Church? The Church, it is allowed, is the common nursery from whence paradise is planted; and yet infants must not be taken into this nursery, but heaven must have them from the wild waste! Dr John Owen was a man whom no modest person would venture to pronounce either a shallow divine or a superficial reasoner; he was a person much conversant with the controversial parts of divinity, eminently versed in the *rationale* of the Divine dispensations, well acquainted with the nature of positive institutions in general, and the subjects and mode of baptism in particular possessed a share of his investigations. Thus qualified to instruct us, let us hear his words:—"Why is it the will of God that *unbelievers* and *impenitent* sinners should not be baptized?

* Dr Owen, On the Hebr., vol. ii., p. 328, Messrs Johnstone & Hunter's Ed.

It is because, not granting them the *grace*, He will not grant them the *sign*. If, therefore, God *denies* the *sign* to the infant seed of believers, it must be *because* He denies them the grace of it; and then *all* the children of believing parents, dying in their infancy, must without hope be eternally damned. I do not say that all must be so who *are not* baptized, but *all must be so whom God* WOULD HAVE NOT BAPTIZED." * Infants being not *naturally incapable* of baptism, as before shewn, any more than of circumcision, and Scripture evidence affording no express exception against them, but, on the contrary, contains much in their favour as members of the Christian Church and their right to baptism, may we not ask, if Dr Owen's reasoning be just, (and we may safely challenge the whole *corps* of Antipædobaptists to refute it,) must not *our denying* baptism to our infant children be a conduct towards them highly *uncharitable* as well as unscriptural and unreasonable? We impeach not the tenderness and affection of our brethren to their children in *other* respects, and readily suppose that there is a sense in which every *good man* among them "*devotes* them," as Dr Stennett expresses it, "by faith [though in this respect *weak*] and prayer to God; *separates* them as far as his influence reaches [*except* in the case of church-membership and baptism] to the fear and service of heaven; and they derive from their connexion with him such external advantages of a religious kind [though in an *irregular* way, if it be irregular to separate what God hath joined, the *charter* and the *seal*, and to tear away the stamp and signature of the only charter whereby they enjoy those external advantages] as often prove the happy means of their conversion and salvation." † The *uncharitableness* we are speaking of consists not in restraining prayer before God for them, or in neglecting moral parental duties, (except what arises naturally and necessarily from their distinguishing tenet,) but in acting the part of the disciples over again, who *forbade* infants and children to be brought to Christ in all the *external ways* they are capable of being brought.

Second Coroll.—From what has been said, it may evidently appear what that *church-membership* is which we claim for infants, and what those different *relations* are in which they stand to Christ and His people, before and after baptism. The term itself, *church-membership*, being expressive of relation and comparison,

* Dr Owen, Of Infant Baptism, vol. xvi., p. 260, Messrs Johnstone & Hunter's Edition.

† Answer to Dr A., p. 87.

admits of different *degrees;* so that the same person may be a church-member in one sense, but not in another. The gospel Church is a select body of people, of which Christ is the Head, and each person of which it is composed is a member. But this body may be *select* in a manner less or more strict; and, consequently, the *relation* of the members to the Head and to each other must be proportionally remote or intimate. Accordingly, we may observe—

(1.) That persons are often called *church-members* in this controversy, when they are so only *de jure*, or *quoad debitum*. And in this sense we regard all adults *before* baptism, who nevertheless *may* be lawfully baptized. The infant children of professing Christians, those of our opponents not excepted, we also regard as church-members in the same sense, though not baptized. And we cannot but consider this circumstance with pleasure and gratitude, on behalf of children, that there is *one degree* of church-membership—that which is *quoad debitum*—which it is out of the power of men to deprive them of. The propriety of their being denominated *members* of the Church, antecedent to their being ministerially recognised such, arises hence: that they actually possess the qualifications of members, and, therefore, *are so* in the *Divine estimation*, and *ought* to be so in ours, though, *quoad eventum*, they may never be baptized, through the mistakes and faults of others. This relation to Christ is appointed and determined by Himself, and stands absolutely independent on the will of others.

(2.) Persons are called *church-members* in a *stricter* sense when they have been regularly admitted by baptism, the ordinance of admission, into the number of those who are professed *Christians*, in contradistinction to Jews, heathens, &c. And it is evident from the nature of the case, that *this* degree of membership depends on the will and ministry of man, *quoad eventum*. The *right* of membership, being a divine gift, must needs be *absolute;* but the public avowal and recognition of that right by an ordinance instituted for that purpose, must needs depend on the judgment, volition, and agency of men. If any abuse this discretionary trust, they are accountable to the Judge of all; nevertheless, with regard to the validity of *ministerial* acts, in admitting persons into *this* membership, or shutting them out, we may say, that what is bound on earth is bound in heaven, and what is loosed on earth is loosed in heaven. Therefore, the first relation is to be sought from the

determination of God, but the last from the determination of man. And then alone is the latter right, when it coincides with, and is expressive of, the former. And in reference to baptism, we may say it *belongs* to the first, but *makes* the second.

(3.) Again; persons are called *church-members* in the *strictest* sense, when they have consented to associate together for Divine worship and Christian fellowship, for promoting their mutual edification, the conversion of souls, &c. But such a body is not, strictly speaking, *the Church* of Christ, but *a part* of it. Christ has but *one* body, the Church, mystically, and but *one* visibly; and as to Congregational churches, so called, they are but collective parts of that one visible Church. Or if we borrow an illustration from the starry heaven, we may say, that a *particular* church is a *constellation* of stars, which makes but a small *part* of the general catalogue.

But what particularly deserves our notice is, that the *first* relation *entitles* to baptism; that the *second* relation supposes the *application* of baptism; and the *third alone* is what infants and young children are to be debarred from. And this exclusion is no arbitrary proceeding, but results from the very nature and design of such a society. The only *positive* qualification requisite for this last membership is, that a person be baptized; and in that respect every baptized person may be said to have a legal right to it. But again; seeing the nature and design of such a society, as may be gathered from nature and revelation, does not comprehend infants and children, and adults evidently disqualified by error and wickedness,—the one not possessing natural, the other not moral qualifications,—the not admitting baptized infants to the Lord's supper, which is *peculiar* to church-members in this strictest sense, is founded on the justest principles; for when laws and rights *positive* and *moral interfere*, the former must yield to the latter.

If our opponents wilfully overlook these plain and necessary distinctions, it is no wonder, if so disposed, that they should be able to represent the Pædobaptists in an inconsistent and ridiculous light; for what armour is proof against such weapons? At this rate, the sacredness and dignity of truth itself are no defence. Mr B., having made some remarks on the word "covenant" as used by Mr Matthew Henry, (as if *that* term also had not *various* acceptations,) adds:—"The conduct of Mr Henry is quite similar in regard to *church-membership*. For in one place he tells us that baptism

is an ordinance of Christ, *whereby* the person baptized is *solemnly* ADMITTED a member of the visible Church; yet in the same treatise he assures us that baptism is an ordinance of the visible Church, and pertains therefore to those that ARE *visible members* of the Church. Their covenant-right and their *church-membership* entitleth them to baptism. Baptism doth not *give* the title, but *recognise* it, and complete that church-membership which before was imperfect." * But does this passage deserve all the ridicule Mr B. affects to treat it with? Is there anything here deserving of "the sarcastic reflection of a profane poet?" Mr B.'s *ironies*, in the present case, affect, not Mr Henry's *cause*, nor the *sentiments* here advanced, but the defect of the language, or at most an omission in *defining* terms and making distinctions, to prevent the cavils of those who seek occasion.

Having examined, as proposed, who are the proper *subjects* of baptism,—particularly, whether it is the WILL OF CHRIST that the infants of believing or Christian parents should be baptized,—we proceed to consider next the *mode* of administering the ordinance.

* Pædobaptism Examined, vol. ii., p. 213; and Mr Henry's Treatise on Baptism, pp. 25, 66, 107; or pp. 1145–1204, Miscellaneous Works of, by Sir J. B. Williams.

CHAPTER IV.

CONCERNING THE SIGNIFICATION OF THE TERMS *BAPTIZE* AND *BAPTISM;* WHEREIN IS PARTICULARLY SHEWN, THAT, AT LEAST WHEN CEREMONIALLY OR SACRAMENTALLY USED, THEY ARE *GENERIC* TERMS, COMPREHENDING DIFFERENT SPECIFIC MODES OF PURIFICATION AND CLEANSING.

§ 1. Of the point in question. § 2–10. That these words are *generic* terms, and not confined to the specific mode of dipping, appears, (First,) From a comparative view of their different renderings, and an investigation of their *primary* meaning. § 11–22. (Second,) From a view of some of those passages where the terms refer to other modes rather than that of dipping. § 23–29. (Third,) From the verdict of eminent authors. § 30–42. (Fourth,) From the concessions of opponents. § 43. Corollaries:—(First,) The mode variable. § 44. (Second,) The practice of the Greek Church of no importance, as the mode is free. § 45. (Third,) The primitive custom, were it invariable, would not support the *essentiality* of dipping. § 46. (Fourth,) That though the design of baptism were more fully expressed by immersion than by pouring or sprinkling, yet would not immersion be proved essential, nor any way serviceable to the cause of our opponents. § 47–49. The supposed reasons, rise, and progress of pouring and sprinking, instead of immersion, retorted.

§ 1. The present question is not whether the terms *baptize* and *baptism*, when they occur in *profane* writers, most commonly signify *to immerse* and *immersion;* but, whether these terms, when they occur in the New Testament, convey the idea of immersion *exclusively;* or, whether these actions are *essentially* included in the terms when used in a ceremonial and sacramental sense.

Again; the question is not which of several modes is the *most eligible*, but whether any mode whatever, besides immersion, is *valid;* and, in short, whether the terms baptizing and plunging are *synonymous* in reference to the baptismal ordinance. We have, therefore, no immediate controversy with our brethren the

Baptists about their *preferring* plunging to sprinkling or any other mode of using water. Our principle, the confirmation of which I am now engaged in, makes no direct attack upon the *practice* of the Baptists, however universal, any more than on the rubric of the Church of England, or the custom of the Greek Church; but upon that sentiment which maintains that the prevailing practice of their opponents, in pouring or sprinkling water on the subject, is a *mere nullity*. Were their attack upon us about a practice which they think is *less proper* than their own, yet *not invalid* and *null*, the state of the controversy would be essentially altered. Consequently, our opposers' appeal to the *custom* of any Churches, ancient or modern, as using immersion, in favour of their practice, is not to the question. To answer their purpose, these ought to be brought testifying that dipping is *essential* to the ordinance. The Baptists will not allow that there is the least affinity between baptizing and sprinkling; nay, that sprinkling, pouring, and all such modes of applying water to the subject, are diametrically opposite to baptism; so that neither by a synecdoche, or allowable catachresis, or any other figure of speech, according to them, can sprinkling, &c., be called baptism. But if we appeal to the language and concessions of those very persons and Churches who are summoned to witness against us, and particularly the ancients, on this just and proper state of the question, we shall find them unanimous in their decisions *against* our brethren. For they call *baptism* by many names that have no relation at all to the action of dipping any more than sprinkling, such as—the grace, the gift, regeneration, illumination, absolution, the unction, salvation, the mysterious sacrament, the seal, the mark of the Lord, tinction, laver of regeneration, the great circumcision, the initiation, consecration, consummation, the sacred symbol, &c.* We are as much against *confining* the term *βαπτίζω* to either or both of the specific actions of sprinkling or pouring as to that of dipping.

When, therefore, Mr B. expresses himself in the following language, what does he better than yield the cause?—"*N.B.*—To obviate mistakes, the reader is desired to observe, that *many* of the following quotations are to be considered as concessions, made by these learned authors; *no inconsiderable part* of them ASSERTING, notwithstanding what they here say, that the word baptism

* See Bingham's Antiquities of the Christian Church, book xi., chap. i., *passim*.

signifies *pouring* and *sprinkling* AS WELL AS immersion." * And again :—" *N.B.*—Candour demands we should here acknowledge that, though these numerous and learned authors have expressed themselves in the following manner, yet *many of them insist* upon it as highly probable that the apostles did sometimes administer baptism by *pouring* or *sprinkling*." † *How many*, Mr B. does not inform us. But his quoting *any* who *sprinkle* the subject and pronounce him *baptized*, can answer no other purpose than to amuse and dazzle "the eye of a superficial observer." When our opponents, then, "produce instances where *βαπτίζω* signifies *to dip*, they take pains to prove what we never denied—viz., that *dipping* is not *excluded* from the signification of the original word ; and many voluminous treatises they have thrown away upon this needless subject. But, if they intend that their reasoning should amount to conclusive argument, and that their sentiment should keep pace with their avowed practice, they ought to prove that the controverted word signifies to *dip* ONLY, and by a *total* immersion ; that the sacrament is invalidated by *every other* mode of applying the baptismal water ; and that the authors they produce as countenancing their sentiments never acknowledge that *other* modes of sacramental washing are equally valid with that of *dipping*. Till they prove these particulars they prove nothing." ‡

In one of his *reflections* on the signification of the terms *baptize* and *baptism*, Mr B. says :—"By the numerous quotations here produced from learned Pædobaptists, we are expressly taught, that immersion, plunging, or dipping, is the *radical*, *primary*, and *proper* meaning of the word *baptism*. Such is the purport of what the most learned Pædobaptists acknowledge and assert, concerning the word in dispute ; which, whether it be in favour of *our* [the plunging] practice, I leave the reader to judge."§ *One* of his readers, at least, judges, that what he has produced from Pædobaptist writers as concessions "no more regard the leading point *in dispute* than," I was going to say, "the first verse of the first Book of Chronicles, 'Adam, Sheth, Enosh !'" For the *immediate* question is not, what is the "*radical*, *primary*, and *proper* meaning of the word *baptism*," in a *philological* or *etymological* sense ; but, whether the LEGAL, the *ceremonial*, or *sacramental* sense of the word excludes, absolutely *excludes*, every other idea but *im-*

* Pædobaptism Examined, vol. i., p. 44. † Ibid., p. 191.
‡ Mr De Courcy's Rejoinder, p. 143. § Pædobaptism Examined, pp. 69, 70.

mersion. No concession short of this is of any real service to our opponents' cause. If it be said, that such concessions favour their "*practice,*" let the unwary know, that this is only substituting a mean *sophism* in the room of solid *argument.* For if they *only prefer*, for reasons that appear to them conclusive, their plunging to our pouring or sprinkling, they are cordially welcome to adhere to that practice, as the Greek Church does; but let them not uncharitably condemn and *nullify* the baptismal practice of all Christendom besides. I say, they are *cordially welcome;* for though no human act, as formerly observed, in its particular and singular nature, *secundum individuum,* terminating in actual existence, and attended with all its circumstances, can be morally *indifferent;* yet it may be so *secundum speciem:* therefore we regard the question, Which mode of administering the ordinance shall I adopt, that of plunging or that of sprinkling? *secundum speciem,* INDIFFERENT. If, then, by "*our practice*" Mr B. means that he and his brethren administer by plunging, from *mere preference,* without *nullifying* the ordinance when any other mode of using water is adopted, his numerous quotations are nothing better than vain parade, that does not at all affect the ESSENTIALITY *of dipping,* which, and which alone, is the point in contest.* But if by "*our practice*" be intended the *plunging* of those persons who had been before *sprinkled* in the name of the sacred Trinity, under pretence that the latter was *no baptism,* the sophistical insinuation, that "this practice" is countenanced by the venerable list of Pædobaptists which he quotes, deserves a severe reprehension; as it has *no foundation in* TRUTH, as it tends to impeach, not only the consistency, but the Christian sincerity of these eminent characters, and as it tends to mislead the incautious reader. I confess that such conduct appears to me no less disingenuous and unreasonable, than that of a person, who, at any rate to gain his point, should rummage a great number of Episcopalian writers in search of *concessions,* importing that "the radical, primary, and proper meaning" of the word PRAYER, favours the *extemporaneous* mode of praying; and thence infering, that this extemporaneous mode is *essential* to all acceptable prayer,—that he who *reads* a

* "If Anabaptists were content with maintaining their particular *mode* only as the favourite badge of their party, without insisting on it as the *essence* of the sacrament, our controversy would be instantaneously at an end."—*Mr De Courcy's Rejoinder,* p. 126.

form, however devout his disposition, and however earnest his supplications, does not *pray*;—and then should appeal to fifty or sixty authors in vindication of his ill-grounded *dogma*, that he who *reads* a prayer cannot be said to *pray*, as if all those authors were on his side.

§ 2. What I assert, and intend to demonstrate, is, that *βαπτίζειν* and *βαπτισμὸς* are not synonymous with *to plunge* and *plunging*, but are GENERIC TERMS, not *confined* to the specific mode of dipping; and, therefore, that they *include other* modes of purification, as by pouring, sprinkling, &c. But previous to the direct proof of this position let the following things be noted as *postulata*:—(1.) That the *biblical* sense alone of these terms should ultimately decide in the present controversy. (2.) That it is by no means *necessary* that this biblical sense should be the same as the *classical*, or that which is commonly found in profane authors;* as might be instanced in many other Scripture terms. (3.) That it is not *necessary* (as before observed concerning *μαθητεύω*) that the primary *philological* or *etymological* sense of these terms should be the *legal* one; as the remark, respecting *other* terms, may be made abundantly evident from the laws of God and men. (4.) That, therefore, *that* bids fairest to be the sacramental sense or legislative force of these terms, which most unexceptionably agrees with all those passages in the New Testament where these words are found.

Accordingly, in proof of our general position we appeal—

§ 3. (FIRST,) To a comparative view of different renderings of *all* those passages in the New Testament where the words in question occur. A *partial* specimen of this method of investigation we are furnished with by Mr B. himself, where he observes:—"While our brethren maintain that the term *baptism*, when relating to the institution so called, means anything short of *immer-*

* "Nothing is more common, than for the *same words*, in the mouths of different nations, to have *different significations*. In this case to consult your *dictionary* would be a certain means to put you wrong as to the *literal sense* of an author. It often happens that one author uses a word in a different sense from that of another—the *sacred* writers of the New Testament, forming their *style* upon the *Hebrew* and *Septuagint version*, often give a particular meaning to the *Greek* words. If, therefore, we were to render such words by their *most usual* signification, we should indeed render them according to the *letter*, but at the same time should be far from expressing the *ideas* annexed to them by the author."—*Beausobre and L'Enfant's Introduction to the Reading of the Holy Scriptures, ap. Bishop Watson's Collection of Theological Tracts*, vol. iii., p. 103.

sion, it behoves them to inform us which of our English words is competent to express its adequate idea. Is it *washing?* If so, we may consider that word as a proper translation of it, and a complete substitute for it, wherever the ordinance before us is mentioned by the sacred writers. Let us make the experiment on a *few* passages. . . . . Is it *pouring?* Is it *sprinkling*, &c.?"* Let us improve the hint, and pursue the plan. But first observe that we do not consider any English word as a "*proper* translation of these Greek terms, or a *complete* substitute" for them, though our opponents do. And yet, with this disadvantage, I am inclined to believe, they will have no great cause to triumph. But what English term shall we adopt? Shall it be either of those already mentioned by Mr B.? Nay, *these* I would as much object to as himself nearly; for the obvious reason that they are *specific* terms, the one excluding the other, contrary to the general thesis. If we adopt *either* of these, the inconvenience will soon appear, and we suppose a similar inconvenience will arise from adopting the English term *plunging*, and for a like reason. I insist, then, that a *generic* term, such as *purification, dedication, consecration, separation, initiation*, or the like, comes nearer the sacramental sense of *baptism*, than *immersion*. Let us try the experiment with the words PURIFY and PURIFICATION, for want of some still nearer to the import of the expressive original:—

Matt. iii. 6, 7, 11, "And were *purified* [plunged] of him [ἐν] in [or, at] Jordan.† . . . . When he saw many . . . . come to

* Pædobaptism Examined, vol. i., pp. 86, 87.

† To be baptized, that is purified, IN Jordan, (leaving the *mode* of purifying out of the question,) proves no more than that they were in the channel, or between the banks of the river; for thus the apostle Paul says, "And were all baptized [purified, initiated] unto Moses ἐν τῇ θαλάσσῃ, IN *the sea*," (1 Cor. x. 2,) that is, in the dry *channel* of the *sea*. And of the same it is said, "The children of Israel went (εἰς μεσον της θαλασσης, *Sept.*) INTO *the midst of the sea*," that is, of the *channel*. And, indeed, to call the *channel* of the waters, or the whole cavity between the two banks of a river, metonymically *the river*, is perfectly conformable to the common modes of speech. So that the question remains *in statu quo*, as to any decisive *proof* deduced from the phrases *into* and *in the river*. Nor does it appear to me *so probable* (*cæt. par.*) that such a situation was appointed or preferred on account of the *act of dipping*, as that it was subservient to *other important* purposes. For if, as we are told, private *baths* were numerous in that country, and if such numbers were so well affected to John as to be *immersed* by him, it is manifest he could be at no loss for *baptisteries*. Besides, if the confession of sins, and profession of repentance, were *personal*, as our opposers insinuate, how much more commodious must have been those retired *baths?* Not to say that the *much water* of

his *purification*, [plunging] he said unto them, ... I *purify* [plunge] you with water, but he shall *purify* [plunge] you with the Holy Ghost and with fire."* Ver. 13–16, "Then cometh Jesus

Jordan or Ænon appears as *unnecessary* for immersion in Judea, as the *much water* of the Thames in London. Or if it must be in a more open situation, the *little water* of any running brook might be made in a few hours as convenient for immersion as any part of Jordan. Therefore, *necessity* here must be discarded. But if we consider John's baptism as a *general purification* of the Jews, as a prelude to the Messiah's appearance, and if we consider the *vast multitudes* that resorted to him on that occasion, the *eligibleness* of the situation, nay, the *necessity* of a *large current* of water, is manifest. Such a place, then, as the verge of Jordan or Ænon, on the principles I maintain,—that is, when we join the ideas of a general and national confession of sin, and purification or ceremonial sanctification thereupon, and the *great concourse* of people whose refreshment and comfort were consulted, (not to mention the watering of their beasts, on which, probably, many of them rode,)—was not only expedient, but highly *necessary;* whereas, on the contracted hypothesis of our opponents, who suppose none were baptized by John but such as he deemed penitent and pious, from their *personal* converse with him, such a situation appears totally *unnecessary*. In the one case we can discover neither the prudence of John in choosing, nor the wisdom and goodness of God in appointing those situations; but in the other case, whether *either* is discoverable, let the impartial judge.

* In Mal. iii. 1, we have a prophecy of John the Baptist: "Behold, I will send my messenger, and he shall prepare the way before me." Then (ver. 2) of Christ it is said, "He is like a refiner's *fire*, and like fullers' soap." And then (ver. 3) it is added, "He shall sit as a refiner and *purifier* of silver: and he shall *purify* the sons of Levi, and purge them as gold and silver." In perfect conformity to this prophetic passage, and, it should seem, with a designed and direct reference to it, (see Mark i. 2–4,) that very messenger says of his Lord whose way he was preparing, "He shall *baptize* [*i.e.*, PURIFY] you with (ἐν, in, by, or by means of) fire." Hence we may gather that John's *primary* idea under the word *baptize* was not to *plunge*, but to PURIFY. But should it be said, that the gold or silver in a crucible is immersed in the fire *in order* to be purified, it is nothing to the present point, except it be a giving of it up. For if to *purify* be the *primary* idea, to *plunge* must be only a secondary one, but no way essential, and if in any case *necessary*, it is so *by accident*. And, therefore, to plunge and to baptize are not *synonymous;* which is the point in dispute. Again; though purification may be performed BY plunging, yet they are far from being synonymous, else we may say that the phrases, "a *purifier* of silver," and "he shall *purify* the sons of Levi," may be equally read, "a *plunger* of silver!" and "he shall *plunge* the sons of Levi!" And let it be remembered that as our Lord is likened to *soap* as well as to *fire* in His operation, so to *cleanse* by means of *soap*, and to *purify* by means of *fire*, are different representations of the *same* thing. Therefore, as the term *baptize* IS made synonymous with *purify* by John, by the same rule we are taught to regard *baptize* as synonymous with *cleanse* in this connexion. And, as it would be ridiculous to denominate a refiner or *purifier* of silver, "a *plunger* or *dipper* of silver," I suppose it would not be much less so to call one who *cleanses* by means of soap, or (according to Malachi, in the passage just referred to) a fuller, "a *plunger* or *dipper* in soap!" Which, if I mistake not, clearly shews that though the refiner or fuller may employ the specific action of dipping to effect the end proposed, yet this action, properly

to be *purified** [plunged] of him. . . . . I have need to be *purified* [plunged] of thee. Jesus, when he was *purified*, [plunged,] went up straightway." Chap. xx. 22, 23, "Are ye able to be *purified*† with the *purification* that I am *purified* [plunged with the plunging that I am plunged] with? Ye shall indeed be *purified* with the *purification* that I am *purified* [plunged with the plunging that I am plunged] with." Chap. xxi. 25, "The *purification* [plunging] of John, whence was it?" Chap. xxviii. 19, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, *purifying*‡ [plunging] them."

speaking, is only a *mode* of effecting the *primary* design. To these remarks we may not improperly add what the learned Dr John Owen says—viz., that βαπτίζω "*nowhere* signifies to *dip*, but as denoting a *mode* of, and *in order to* WASHING, [or CLEANSING,] and that it signifies to *wash* [or *cleanse*] in all good authors." See Dr Owen's Works, vol. xvi., p. 267; and Dr Ridgley's Body of Divinity, vol. ii., p. 416.

* It has been shewn before that John's baptism was one of the Jewish purifications, (see Chap. III., § 37, and Chap. II., § 12;) but here it may be asked, How can the idea of *purification* be applied to Christ? I answer, with the same propriety as to any other Hebrew. For as it would be no degradation of His moral and divine character to suppose Him capable of *ceremonial* impurities as well as any other Jew, such as followed the touch of a corpse, a bone, &c., (see Num. xix.,) so it would be no impropriety to allow that He might be *purified*. And, indeed, seeing He condescended to inhabit a *polluted* world, and became a physician to publicans and sinners, embracing all proper opportunities for promoting the corporal as well as the spiritual welfare of the children of men, what sense more natural can we assign to His baptism than that of a *general purification*? He became subject to the ceremonial as well as the moral law, as appears from His circumcision, and other considerations; but since it does not appear probable that He did on the one hand scrupulously attend to the purifying positive rites which were "made for man," so, on the other hand, when He says, "Thus it behoveth us to fulfil all righteousness," it is highly probable that He, as the *Lord of ceremonies*, (as well as of the Sabbath,) should appoint and submit to *one baptism* as a *general substitute* for all ceremonial purifications. Thus a cumbersome yoke was taken away, and only an easy one appointed, which might answer every purpose, as suited to the more simple, yet sublime genius of the Messiah's kingdom. To which we may add, that the idea of *separation* or *dedication* to God may be also conveyed here by the term *baptized*, as well as that of purification; and indeed ceremonial purification does itself imply a separation from any relative impurity, for entering into a closer and more special degree of relative holiness, which very well agrees with our Lord's entrance on His public ministry immediately after His baptism.

† Here seems to be implied the idea of *initiation* as of proselytes, as also the *secondary* idea of being *tried*, or put to the proof, attending some kinds of purification, as of metals by the fire, cloth by the fulling-mill, &c. (See Job xxiii. 10; Ps. xii. 6, lxvi. 10, 11; Zech. xiii. 9; and especially Dan. xii. 10; 1 Pet. i. 6, 7; Prov. xvii. 3.) "In nomine *baptismi* ratio metaphoræ apte constat. Scimus enim baptismo ad sui abnegationem, ad veterem nominen crucifigendum, denique ad crucis tolerantiam *initiari* fideles."—*Calvin* in loc.

‡ *Separating* them from the world, *dedicating* them to me, and *initiating* them into my Church, by the purification of water.

Mark i. 4, 5, "John did *purify* [plunge] in the wilderness, and preached the *purification* [plunging] of repentance. . . . . And were all *purified* [plunged] of him [ἐν] in [or, at] the river of Jordan." Ver. 8, 9, "I indeed have *purified* [plunged] you with water; but he shall *purify* [plunge] you with the Holy Ghost. . . . . And was *purified* [plunged] of John [εἰς*] in [or, at] Jordan." Chap. vii. 4, "And when they come from the market, except they *purify*, [plunge,] they eat not. The *purifying*† [plunging] of cups and pots, of brazen vessels and tables." Chap. xi. 30, "The *purification* [plunging] of John, was it from heaven?" Chap. xvi. 16, "He that believeth and is *purified*‡ [plunged] shall be saved."

Luke iii. 3, "Preaching the *purification* [plunging] of repentance."§ Ver. 7, "Then said he to the multitude that came forth to be *purified* [plunged] of him." Ver. 12, "Then came also publicans to be *purified*, [plunged.]" Ver. 16, "I indeed *purify* [plunge] you with water, [ὕδατι;] but he shall *purify* [plunge] you with the Holy Ghost and with fire, [καὶ πυρί.]" Ver. 21, 22, "Now when all the people were *purified*, [plunged,] it came to pass, that Jesus also being *purified*, ‖ [plunged,] and praying, the heaven was opened, and the Holy Ghost descended in a bodily shape." Chap. vii. 29, 30, "All the people . . . . being *purified* with

* For ἐν, by an enallage; as Matt. ii. 23, "He dwelt εἰς πόλιν, in (or, *at*) *a city* called Nazareth." Mark ii. 1, "That he was εἰς οἶκόν, *in the house*." Acts iv. 5, [Gr.] εἰς Ἰερουσαλήμ, "*at* (or, *in*) *Jerusalem*." Matt. xii. 41, "They repented εἰς κήρυγμα, *at* (or, *with*, *by means of*, *in virtue of*) *the preaching* of Jonas." John ix. 7, "Go, wash εἰς κολυμβήθραν, *in* (or, *at the brink of*) *the pool* of Siloam." In reference to this last instance, the following words from an acute and masterly writer deserve insertion:—"To infer always a plunging of the whole body in water, because the word *in* (or εἰς) occurs in the narrative, would in many instances be equally false as absurd. For instance, our Lord commands the young man born blind to wash *in* the pool of Siloam; but that his whole body was not immersed in it is plain, because only his *eyes* were affected, and only this part was to have been washed; in doing which there was no immersion at all."—*Mr De Courcy's Rejoinder*, p. 232.

† Ceremonial *cleansing*, which was effected by various *modes*, as *pouring*, *sprinkling*, *rinsing*, *bathing*, or any kind of *washing*. ‡ *Devoted* to me.

§ Which led to, and laid the subjects under strong obligations of, repentance and the fruits of righteousness; and as a ground of encouragement and motive thereto, the remission of sin and the blessings of the Messiah's kingdom were constantly exhibited.

‖ Including, probably, His being explicitly *initiated* into His public ministry, warfare, and bloody trials. "Christus vero ad prædicandum evangelium se accingens, tam baptismo *initiatus est* in munus suum, quam spiritu sancto instructus." —*Calvin* in loc.

the *purification* [plunged with the plunging] of John. But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not *purified* [plunged] of him." Chap. xi. 38, "And when the Pharisee saw it, he marvelled that he had not first *purified** [plunged] before dinner." Chap. xii. 50, "But I have a *purification* to be *purified*† [plunging to be plunged] with." Chap. xx. 4, "The *purification* [plunging] of John."

John i. 25, 26, "Why *purifiest*‡ [plungest] thou then? . . . . I *purify* [plunge] with water." Ver. 28, "These things were done where John was *purifying*, [plunging.]" Ver. 31, "That he should be made manifest to Israel, therefore am I come *purifying* [plunging] with water." Ver. 33, "He that sent me to *purify* [plunge] with water, the same is he which *purifieth* [plungeth] with the Holy Ghost." Chap. iii. 22, 23, "After these things came Jesus, and *purified*, [plunged.] And John also was *purifying* [plunging] in [or, at] Ænon. And they came, and were *purified*, [plunged.]" Ver. 26, "Behold the same *purifieth*, [plungeth,] and all men come to him." Chap. iv. 1, 2, "That Jesus made and *purified* [plunged] more disciples than John, (though Jesus himself *purified* [plunged] not, but his disciples.)" Chap. x. 40, "Where John at first *purified*, [plunged.]"

§ 4. Acts i. 5, "For John truly *purified* [plunged] with water,

* Washed his hands, (Mark vii. 2, 3,) as a mode of ceremonial *cleansing* among the Jews.

† Intimating also that He was to be severely *tried* and afflicted, as before observed.

‡ Why dost thou *set apart* the people to a higher degree of relative holiness than usual, by this purification of water, "if thou be not that Christ?" The Pharisees took it for granted that so general a purifying and sanctifying of the people was a signal of some great approaching change among them, and what might be well expected at the coming of the Messiah; nay, they seem to take it strange that any should undertake the work *but* the Messiah. Now, if *plunging* was the *mode* of John's purifying rite, is it probable that these Pharisees, fond as they were of ceremonies, and addicted as they were to *baptisms* in particular, should assign to such a Messiah as they expected the arduous task of *plunging* the inhabitants of Jerusalem, of all Judea, and of all the regions round about Jordan? To suppose that even the Pharisees, who could occasionally swallow a camel, connected such an amphibious idea with the splendid regal character of the expected Deliverer, is little short of supposing them to have been as destitute of common sense as they were of real godliness. And even independent of such a strange supposed coalition of ideas, "how *one* administrator could *plunge* head-over-ears such an immense and promiscuous *multitude*, will ever, to candour and common sense, appear either as absolute miracle or romance."—*Mr De Courcy's Rejoinder*, p. 235.

[ὕδατι;] but ye shall be *purified** [plunged] [ἐν] with [or, by] the Holy Ghost not many days hence." Ver. 22, "Beginning from the *purification* [plunging] of John." Chap. ii. 38, "Then Peter said unto them, Repent, and be *purified*† [plunged] every one of you." Ver. 41, "Then they that gladly received his word were *purified*, [plunged.]" Chap. viii. 12, 13, "They were *purified*, [plunged,] both men and women. [Comp. Josh. viii. 25, 26.] Then Simon himself believed also; and when he was *purified*, [plunged,] he continued with Philip." Ver. 16, "For as yet he [the Holy Ghost] was fallen upon‡ none of them: only they were *purified* [plunged] in the name of the Lord Jesus." Ver. 36, "And the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be *purified*,§ [plunged?]" Ver. 38, "And they went down both into [εἰς, *ad*, vel *in*, to, or towards‖] the water, both Philip and the eunuch; and he *purified* [plunged] him." Chap. ix. 18, "And he received sight forthwith, and arose, and was *purified*, [plunged.]" Chap. x. 37, "After the *purification* [plunging] which John preached." Ver. 47, 48, "Can any man forbid water, that these should not be *purified*, [plunged?] And he commanded them to be *purified* [plunged] in the name of the Lord." Chap. xi. 16, "John indeed *purified* [plunged] with water [ὕδατι;] but ye shall be *purified* [plunged] [ἐν] with [or, by] the Holy Ghost." Chap. xiii. 24, "When John had first preached before His coming the *purification* [plunging] of repentance to all the people of Israel." Chap. xvi. 15, "And when she was *purified*, [plunged,] and her household, she besought us," &c. Ver. 33, "And he took them the same hour of the night, and washed their stripes; and was *purified*, [plunged,] he and all his straightway." Chap. xviii. 8, "And many of the Corinthians hearing believed, and were *purified*, [plunged.]" Ver. 25, "He spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord, knowing only the *purification* [plunging]

* *Separated* and *set apart* for higher and special service, by the imparted influence of the Holy Spirit.

† *Devoted* to Christ, and *initiated* into His Church.

‡ *i. e.*, had *baptized*, Acts xi. 15, 16.

§ *Dedicated* to the Son of God, and *initiated* into His visible Church.

‖ "Εἰς *generally* marks the motion *towards* some term or object to which the thing tends as towards its end."—*Messieurs de Port Royal's Primitives of the Greek Tongue, by Nugent*, p. 296. The use of the particle in the above passage seems parallel with Matt. xvii. 27: "Go thou εἰς τὴν θάλασσαν, to [or, to the side of] the sea, and cast a hook."

of John." Chap. xix. 3–5, "And he said unto them, Unto what [εἰς τί, To what end, for what purpose, to what doctrine] then were ye *purified*,* [plunged?] And they said, Unto John's *purification*,† [plunging.] Then said Paul, John verily *purified* with the *purification* [plunged with the plunging] of repentance. When they heard this, they were *purified* [plunged] in the name of the Lord Jesus." Chap. xxii. 16, "And now why tarriest thou? arise, and be *purified*, [plunged,] and wash away thy sins."

Rom. vi. 3, 4, "Know ye not, that so many of us as were *purified*‡ [plunged] into [εἰς, to, for, into a union with] Jesus Christ were *purified* [plunged] into [εἰς, to the design of] his death.§ Therefore we are buried with him by [διὰ, through, on account of] *purification*‖ [plunging] into [εἰς, for the purpose of] death."¶ 1 Cor. i. 13–17, "Were ye *purified*** [plunged] in the name [εἰς τὸ ὄνομα, to bear the name, to the honour and service] of Paul? I thank God that I *purified* [plunged] none of you, but Crispus and Gaius; lest any should say that I had *purified* [plunged] in mine own name. And I *purified* [plunged] also the household of Stephanas; besides, I know not whether I *purified* [plunged] any other. For Christ sent me not to *purify*, [plunge,] but to preach the gospel." Chap. x. 2, "And were all *purified*†† [plunged] unto Moses in [ἐν, by, with, by means of] the cloud and in [ἐν, by, with, by means of‡‡] the sea." Chap. xii. 13, "For by one Spirit are

* *Set apart* by a solemn ceremony.

† To the preparatory and subservient purposes of John's purifying rite.

‡ Solemnly *set apart*.

§ *i. e.*, the crucifixion, death, and burial of sin.

‖ This obligatory *separation*.

¶ *i. e.*, a state of death in regard of attachment to sin; that as Christ died *on account of* sin, His baptized people, or Christians, *ought* to be, are under peculiar *obligations* to become, dead *as to the practice* and *the love* of sin, or any fellowship with it.

** *Initiated* into the Church.

†† *Separated, devoted, initiated.* Εἰς τὸν Μωσῆν, *to the conduct, discipleship, legislation*, or *dispensation* of Moses. Or, according to some eminent expositors, *by Moses, by the ministry of Moses.* So Beza, for instance, *per Mosen.* But that use of the particle εἰς is somewhat uncommon; nor does the intended analogy between the Christian and Mosaic dispensations, and the professed subjection to their respective founders, appear to me so striking as by the other interpretation.

‡‡ It is difficult to say whether the exact reference here is to place, *in*; to time, *while in*; or to instrumentality, *by means of*; nor is it very material. What the apostle principally refers to is the *fact*, that *all* the fathers, *all* the Israelites, old and young, as the visible Church, were *baptized*—*i. e.*, by that solemn transaction *separated* from the idolatrous Egyptians, and *initiated* into a state of higher rela-

we all *purified** [plunged] into [εἰς] one body." Chap. xv. 29, "Else what shall they do that are *purified* [plunged] for [ὑπὲρ†] the dead? Why are they then *purified* [plunged] for the dead?" Gal. iii. 27, "For as many of you as have been *purified*‡ [plunged] into [εἰς] Christ have put on Christ." Eph. iv. 5, "One *purification*, [plunging.]" Col. ii. 12, "Buried with him in [or, by, ἐν] *purification*, [plunging,] wherein also ye are risen with him." Heb. vi. 2, "The doctrine of *purifications*, [plungings.]" Chap. ix. 10, "Which stood only in meats and drinks, and divers *purifications*, [plungings.]" 1 Pet. iii. 21, "The like figure whereunto, even *purification*, [plunging,] doth also now save us."

§ 5. On this comparative rendering I would make the following reflections:—

(1.) I am far from supposing that any two words in the English language are *adequate* to express the exact idea of the Greek words, βαπτίζω and βαπτισμὸς; yet I appeal to any unprejudiced reader whether some words of *latitude* and *general* import, as *purification, dedication, consecration, separation* to God, or the like, do not convey an idea more conformable to that intended by the *original* terms, than any which the contracted specific ones, so much boasted of by our opponents, as "competent to express the adequate idea" of *baptism*, such as *plunging, dipping*, or *immersion*, are capable of conveying? According to them, *the baptism of the Spirit*, is *the plunging* or *dipping of the Spirit; the baptism of fire*, is *the plunging* or *dipping of fire; the baptism of water*, is *the plunging* or *dipping of water; the baptism of blood*, is *the plunging* or *dipping of blood*. How uncouth such a rendering! And yet how common with the most approved authors these phrases: *baptismus* FLAMINIS (*vel Spiritus*); *baptismus* FLUMINIS (*vel aquæ*); *baptismus* SANGUINIS (*vel martyrii*)? Is it not sufficiently manifest that the grating impropriety of the former rendering is owing entirely to the making of *baptism* and *dipping* or *plunging* synonymous? If, instead of the possessive case we employ a *preposition*, and be that what it may,—*by, with, in*, or any

tive holiness than they were in before—as well as the Christians; who were now growing too secure in their distinguished privileges, and particularly their special relation to God by means of their standing in the Church, and participation of the Christian rites of baptism and the Lord's supper.

* *Initiated.*

† *Instead of—i. e.*, to fill up their place in the Church militant.

‡ *Dedicated.*

other,—the impropriety in some cases will not be lessened but increased. Plunging or dipping *with, by, in,* or *into* the Spirit; how irreverent an idea! Dipping or plunging *by, with, in,* or *into* blood; how preposterous the supposition! And yet, if our opponents are in the right, the *most eminent authors,* both ancient and modern, are chargeable with this irreverent and preposterous conduct, this unparalleled abuse of language.

§ 6. (2.) The reader must have observed, not only how inadequate, but how *absurd,* some of the passages above quoted are made to appear, by the renderings our opponents plead for. For instance, it is repeatedly said, that the disciples should be *baptized* with (*ἐν*) *the Holy Ghost.* Now, if *dipping* be the idea, it must read, either dipped *with,* or *by* the Holy Ghost, or *in* the Holy Ghost; the former is nonsense, the latter too gross and forced an idea to be admitted without the highest necessity for it. Again, their hypothesis is absolutely indefensible without renouncing our public version. For how often do we read, "I *baptize* WITH water?" but if *dipping* and baptizing are synonymous, we may say, "I *dip* or *plunge* WITH water." Which is, in effect, to make our version ridiculous, and the translators, near fifty in number, a set of dunciads. In like manner, "Are ye able to be *baptized* with the baptism that I am baptized with?" *baptismate quo ego baptizor, baptizari?* To be plunged with a plunging! To be anointed with an unction; to be purified with a purification; to be separated with a separation, &c., are, *cum grano salis,* very passable: but what allowance can be made for—*dipped with a dipping!* Moreover; how forced and improbable the idea—plunging or immersing *all nations!* That a nation, even *all nations,* should in time be *separated for God,* ministerially *dedicated to Christ,* by this or the other mode of the Christian purification, are ideas both natural and desirable; but that of *immersing* all nations is neither. Not *natural;* it seems abhorrent from the whole aspect of the gospel dispensation, and is nearly as improbable to be Christ's real meaning as another idea, which may not improperly be called its counterpart, Go, and *dip* all nations in a flame! For (in justification of so *absurd* a meaning) with equal propriety might an administrator have urged, "Was it not said and promised by Christ's venerable harbinger, 'He,' (but He did not baptize except by His *commissioned servants,*) 'He (*βαπτισει*) *shall* PLUNGE *you in fire!*'" Not *desirable;* for the most obvious idea of plunging or totally immersing all the nations,

sounds but little short of a general *cataclysm*—a fearful judgment, and not a seal of the covenant; while, one would be led to think, the commissioned disciples would appear as the ministers of wrath, and not the messengers of peace: especially when we consider that "positive laws imply their negative;" which maxim fatally excludes all hope of being *raised again* by the commissioned plungers. When we hear the prophet say, "So shall He *sprinkle* many nations," we are naturally led to conclude that many other nations, in the time of the Messiah, should be *purified*, as well as the Jews; that is, externally cleansed from their idols and separated for God; but had the prophet said, So shall He *plunge* or *immerse, totally dip* or *overwhelm* all nations, would there not have been the justest ground for fear and trembling, lest God were about to repeal His covenant to Noah and all flesh?

We also meet with, on our opponents' hypothesis, such phrases as these:—John preached the *plunging* of repentance,—the *plunging* of John,—He shall *plunge* you in fire,—he marvelled that He had not first *plunged* before dinner,—ye shall be *plunged* IN (ἐν) the Holy Ghost,—knowing only the *plunging* of John,—*into* (εἰς) *what* were ye *plunged?*—*into* John's *plunging*,*—*plunged into* Jesus Christ,—*plunged into* Moses,—*plunged into* one body,—one Lord, one faith, one *plunging!*—IN† which [*plunging*] ye are

* See Mr B.'s remarks on the particle εἰς, p. 456, *note*, [and p. 507, vol. ii., 2d Edit.] Now if *plunging* or *dipping* be the idea conveyed by the term βάπτισμα in this passage, (Acts xix.,) it would puzzle the subtle genius of an Aquinas to make any tolerable sense of it. If in that early period of the Church they understood by the term baptism nothing less than *dipping;* and the particle εἰς being here connected not with a person (as εἰς Μωσῆν) but a thing, εἰς τι; and if that be also connected with *dipping;* would not Paul's question naturally import, *Into what* were ye *plunged?*—the sea or a river, Jordan or Ænon? But the answer shews, except we make it a very ridiculous and unmeaning one, that they understood the question in no such light; and consequently that the idea of *dipping* was not what they had been used to affix to John's *baptism.* They say that they had been *baptized* into his *baptism;* but that could not possibly be, *dipped* into his *dipping*, without stripping them of common sense, as some have done of the first rudiments of religious knowledge.

† Should it not rather be *after* which? Would it not be worth our opponents' while to rummage Greek authors and lexicons in search of an acceptation of the particle ἐν which implies a *posteriority* of time. And, should that search prove fruitless, would it not be desirable, for the sake of consistency and common sense, and for the credit of inspired language, that they should abate a little of their confidence when they maintain that *immersion, plunging*, or *dipping* are competent to express the original idea? If they grant that the *other* idea of being *raised* is *implied*, we are glad to see them in so fair a way—the way of *consequence!*

RISEN! Is not this mode of translating, espoused by our adversaries, more like a burlesque upon the sacred oracles, than a faithful representation of the inspired meaning? Whereas if we understand by the original terms an idea somewhat compounded of *purification, dedication, separation, initiation,* or the like, according to the connexion in which it stands, we have decent, proper language, and an important meaning. Yet, be it understood, as before shewn, that though we contend it is absurd to make *dipping* and *baptizing* synonymous, the former nevertheless may be a *mode* of the latter. For we are not now inquiring professedly, whether John or any New Testament ministers did, *in fact,* dip any of their converts; but what is the genuine sense of the *terms* of the institution?

§ 7. (3.) Though I believe the word *purification* has a better claim to be a substitute for the sacramental sense of the word *baptism* in the New Testament, than plunging, dipping, or immersion, yet I fully acquiesce in Beza's opinion—viz., that the words *baptize* and *baptism,* in the sacramental sense of them, ought not to be changed for *any other.* He says of those persons (at the head of whom he places Sebastian Castellio) who rashly affect to change these terms for better, as for *lavo, abluo, lotio,* &c., while the others were to be rejected and banished—"*Delicati certe homines!*" "They are surely men of excessive delicacy!"

This able critic observes, "Significat autem τὸ βαπτίζειν *tingere;*"*—"To *baptize* signifies to *dye,*" or *tinge.* And again:—"Neque verò τὸ βαπτίζειν significat *lavare,* nisi a consequenti: nam *proprie* declarat *tingendi causâ* immergere;"†—"Nor, indeed, does βαπτίζειν signify to *wash,* except by consequence; for, *properly,* it signifies to immerse FOR THE SAKE *of dyeing,*" or *tinging.* Here it is observable, that this great man (in common with many other first-rate critics) does not hesitate about the *primary philological* signification, though he severely censures those as over delicate and rash who pretend to substitute another word as a proper translation of the *primary legal* or sacramental meaning. "*Baptism,*" says Mr B., "is a Greek word with an English termination; concerning which Mr Lewis says, (Hist. of Eng. Transl., pp. 317, 326, 2d Edit.) 'Our last translators were directed by the king to retain the old ecclesiastical words,' of which *baptism* was

* Comment. in Matt. iii. 11.

† Ibid. in Marc. vii. 4.

one."* Query: Would Mr B. have these words, *baptize* and *baptism*, discarded, provided our present version were to be changed for another new-furbished, and some *English* words introduced, "competent to express their adequate idea?" If he meant hereby to insinuate that our version is *less perfect* for retaining these words, it is a reflection that affects not ours only, but also nearly all other translations. And since they have been adopted by the sacred writers to express a Divine ordinance, and they have been, for so many ages after, appropriated to this one ordinance by the silent consent of all Churches, so that they have also passed into the vulgar idioms of almost all nations, may not Beza be acquitted from the charge of severity when he says, "*Baptizandi* verbum—*audent* tamen *temere* immutare?"†

§ 8. But, seeing Mr B. lays so much stress on "the *radical*, *primary*, and *proper* meaning of the word" *βαπτίζω*, as if the *legal* meaning were necessarily the *philological*, let us inquire a little, though not essential to my argument, whether he is so triumphantly secure in the possession of this *primary* meaning as he would fain persuade us; and whether the following declarations of Dr Owen are not founded in truth, viz.:—"No one instance can be given in Scripture wherein *βαπτίζω* doth necessarily signify either to *dip* or *plunge*. It doth not signify *properly* to *dip* or *plunge*, for that in Greek is *ἐμβάπτω* and *ἐμβαπτίζω*. It nowhere signifies to *dip*, but as a MODE OF, and *in order to*, washing," wetting, dying?‡ Here observe—

(1.) That the term *primary* is capable of two senses: it may either signify a priority of *design*, or a priority of *execution;* it may refer to the *end*, or to the *means*. Now, what I deny is, that the principal *end* or *design* conveyed by the word is to immerse, though immersion may be a *common mode* of attaining that end; and in *that* sense, which I presume cannot be Mr B.'s meaning, being a very improper one, it may be allowed that *often*, but not universally, the *primary* signification of *βαπτίζειν* is to immerse; that is, though *last* in design, it is *first* in execution. On the contrary, what I affirm, with becoming deference to the learned, is this: that the *primary* signification of *βάπτω* and *βαπτίζω*, sought from the *principal* and *ultimate design* of the agent, or the main *end* in his view, is to *tinge*, to *dye*, to bring the subject

* Pædobaptism Examined, p. 87, vol. i., *note*, 2d Edit.

† Ut supra, in Matt. iii. 11. ‡ Vol. xvi., p. 267, Edin. Edit.

into a *state* of being wet, or coloured; and when the subject is made *wet*, or *dyed*, the end is answered, by *whatever means* effected. But seeing that among dyers, washers, &c., the most *usual mode* of effecting this end is by *putting in* the thing to be impregnated with the moisture and the different hue, hence the *secondary* idea it has acquired of plunging, immersing. And that this is really a *secondary* idea, and by no means *essential* to it, one would think may be decided by an impartial inquirer, by duly attending to this question: Seeing it is universally agreed upon among the learned that these words are etymologically, or according to the radical, primary, and proper meaning, justly rendered by the words *tingo*, or *mergo*, to *tinge*, or *plunge;* which is most likely to be the primary signification,—that the subject is plunged *for the sake* of being tinged, moistened, wetted, or dyed; or else, that it is dyed, wetted, &c., *for the sake* of plunging? Beza, Leigh, Owen, and innumerable other great names, are decisive in favour of the former idea; yes, many of those names that adorn Mr B.'s pages; and, if I mistake not, a critic superior to them all—*common sense*—decides. For if it be said that a being dyed, or wet, is only a *consequence* of being plunged, it is only a mere shuffling and changing the state of the question. For the question is not, when a thing is wetted or dyed by plunging it, which is *first* in the order of time, the plunging or the dyeing; but, whether the plunging be not *entirely subservient* to the other purposes: so entirely subservient, that were the proposed end as well attainable *any other* way, the plunging of it (*cæt. par.*) would be a matter of perfect indifference; and were it better answered any other way, the necessity of that plunging would have no existence. And that this is really the case, that a thing or person may be *tinged, i. e., baptized*, without being immersed, will appear from another observation, viz.—

§ 9. (2.) That the word *tingo*, which corresponds with the *primary* meaning of *baptize*,* is a GENERIC TERM; that is, the radical, primary, proper meaning of it is, not any specific act, as to immerse, to sprinkle, or the like, but to effect the purpose, or to produce a *state*, of being dyed, stained, wetted, &c., by *any way whatever*, as may best answer the end in view. Thus we read,

* Here it is observable that the best Latin writers, both ancient and modern, use the words *tingo* and *baptizo* promiscuously in reference to the Christian ordinance.

for instance, in Persius :—"*Tincta* veneno," *infected* with poison ; "*tingat* olus siccum muriâ," *wet,* or *sparingly imbue,* his garden-stuff with *sauce,* or any liquid to give it a relish ; "Sepe oculos memini *tingebam* parvus olivo," I remember that when a boy I *anointed* my eyes with *olive-oil.* Virgil :—"Musto *tinge* crura," *stain* your legs with *new wine, i. e.,* in treading out the grapes. "Arctos, oceani metuentes æquore *tingi*," the bears that cautiously shun being *wetted in,* or *touched with,* the water of the ocean ; and again, "Oceano properent se *tingere* soles." Of the Cyclops he says, "Stridentia *tingent* Æra lacu," the fiery bars in hissing water *cool.* Horace :—"Vestis *tincta* cocco," a garment *dyed in,* or *tinged with,* purple ; and again, "Lanæ murice *tinctæ*." And in his address to Virgil he says, "Non ego te meis immunem meditor *tingere* poculis," I do not design to *wet* you, if you come empty-handed, with my festive bowls. Martial :—"Tingere nardo," to *anoint* with spikenard.

From these few specimens of the use of this word,—a word which Mr B. must acknowledge "is competent to express the adequate idea" of *βαπτίζω,* as he never fails that I recollect to render it, when found in his Pædobaptist quotations, *to dip,*—it appears that the *primary* signification is, to bring the subject into that *state* which is impregnated or affected with colour, wet, &c. But in a *secondary* sense it is used for *dipping, sprinkling,* &c., for these are only certain *modes* whereby the intended effect may be produced. Thus, for example, a *vesture* may be *tinged* (*βεβαμμένον,* Rev. xix. 13) with blood, by *dipping* it, by *pouring* blood on it, or by *sprinkling* it with blood, slightly or plentifully. But *neither* of these specifications can be the *primary* meaning, except *all* of them could be so, which is absurd. No one has an *exclusive* claim for effecting the primary intention. The *mode* of *tinging,* therefore, as appears from the above few examples out of many, is various ; and the difference of the *action* must depend on the nature of the case.

Dr S. indeed urges the *ipse dixit* of Vossius in opposition to what I have been contending for, whose translation and comment here follow :—"Though *βάπτω* and *βαπτίζω* are used to be translated to dip, or plunge, and then to dye, [tum *mergo,* vel *mergito,* tum *tingo,*] yet the word properly signifies to dip, [*mergo,*] and only by a metalepsis to dye, [*tingo.*] that is," says the Doctor, "as dyeing

implies or *supposes* dipping."* But I see no reason why this strange assertion of Vossius should have any more weight than the declaration of Beza, who asserts the contrary—viz., that the leading signification of *βαπτίζειν*, as well as *βάπτειν*, is *tingere;* while he represents *mergere* as only a *mode* or *accident* of TINGING.† And now the question returns, since the one *ipse dixit* annihilates the other, and the matter is left in that respect *in statu quo*, which of these assertions has reason and truth to support it, *as dyeing* [*tingo*] *implies or supposes dipping?* But if this be the real meaning of Vossius, does he not contradict himself? For *tingo* does not imply or suppose plunging, as we have seen; except we say that a thing has no existence without it possesses also what is merely accidental, which is absurd and contradictory. With the very same propriety we may see that "*tingo* implies or supposes anointing," for *tinging* is effected by anointing, as before shewn, as well as by dipping. I think I may say with greater propriety, "Though *tingo* is used to be translated to *dip* or *plunge*, as well as to *dye*, [by Dr S., Mr B., and others,] yet the word *properly* signifies to dye, stain, tinge, in general, and only by a metalepsis to dip; that is, as dipping *implies* or *supposes* tinging," dyeing, staining, or wetting; and so does washing, and sprinkling, and pouring; nay, also, swilling and painting!

§ 10. (3.) Let us now advance a step further in search of "the *radical, primary*, and *proper* meaning of the word *βαπτίζω*." I believe it is generally allowed, that if there be any *Hebrew* word in the Old Testament that answers to the Greek word in question, it is the verb *tabal*. *Βαπτίζω*, "if you regard the word itself," says Beza, "answers to the Hebrew *tabhal*, rather than *rachatz*."‡ And the general run of lexicographers render it by the same Latin words as they do the Greek term. The learned Castellus, for instance, renders it by "Tinxit, intinxit, demersit, immersit, *baptizavit*." And Buxtorf:—"Tinxit, intinxit, demersit, immersit." Stockius:—"Tinxit, intinxit, immersit, demersit, *βάπτειν, βαπτίζειν*." Leigh:—"Tinxit, intinxit, mersit, immersit; tingendi aut abluendi gratiâ, demersit, *baptizavit*." It is needless to

* Remarks on the Christian Main. Reas., p. 57.

† Comment. in Matt. iii. 11.

‡ "Quod [scil. *baptizandi* verbum] quidem, si vocabulum ipsum spectes, respondent Hebræo *tabhal*, potius quam *rachatz*."—*Comment. in Matt.* iii. 11.

multiply instances in so plain a case. Having premised this much, I shall now lay down another proposition, and produce the evidence for it, viz.—

That the Hebrew word *tabal*, as used in the Old Testament, is a GENERIC TERM; or is a term of *latitude*, and, consequently, that the "*radical, primary,* and *proper* meaning" of it is neither to plunge, to pour, to sprinkle, or any other specific action or *mode* of application whatever, but to *tinge*, to *wet;* and that to plunge is but a *secondary* signification, by a metalepsis; as what is plunged (or sprinkled) may be said to be tinged, but not *vice versâ*. Let us examine the following passages:—

Gen. xxxvii. 31, "And they took Joseph's coat, and killed a kid of the goats, and *tinged* [or, *stained, daubed* *] the coat in [or, *with*] the blood." Lev. iv. 6, "And the priest shall *tinge* [or, *wet*] his finger in [or, *with*] the blood, and sprinkle of the blood," &c. Ver. 17, "And the priest shall *tinge* [or, *wet*] his finger of [or, *by means of, from,*] the blood," [*min haddam,* DE *sanguine.*] Chap. ix. 9, "And the sons of Aaron brought the blood unto him; and he *tinged* [or, *wetted*] his finger in [or, *with*] the blood, and put it upon the horns of the altar." Chap. xiv. 6, "As for the living bird, he shall take it, and the cedar wood, and the scarlet [wool, or stuff,] and the hyssop, and shall *tinge* them *and the living bird* in [or, *with*] the blood of the bird that was killed over the running water." (Comp. ver. 51.) Ver. 16, "And the priest shall *tinge* [or, *wet*] his right finger in [*min hashmen, ex oleo, from, of*] the oil that is in his left hand," or, "in the palm of his left hand," (ver. 15.) Num. xix. 18, "And a clean person shall take hyssop, and *tinge* [*wet, impregnate*] it in [or, *with*] the water, and sprinkle it upon the tent." Deut. xxxiii. 24, "And of Asher he said, ... Let him be acceptable to his brethren, and let him *tinge* [*anoint*] his foot in [or, *with*] oil." (See Luke vii. 46.) Josh. iii. 15, "And as they that bare the ark were come unto Jordan, and the feet of the

* "The *Septuagint* does not render it ἐβαψαν, but ἐμολυναι τον χιτωνα τω αἱματι, *inquinarunt*, they *stained* or *besmeared* the garment, &c. Besides, indeed reason concurs in establishing this translation; for, surely, it is not to be supposed that Joseph's brethren would *immerge* or *overwhelm* his garment *in* the blood; since that very circumstance would manifestly tend to detect their crime, and to make their story about Joseph's being destroyed by a wild beast, to wear the appearance not only of improbability, but of palpable falsehood."—*Mr De Courcy's Rejoinder*, p. 163.

priests that bare the ark were *tinged* [*wetted*] in the brim [or, *with the very edge*] of the water," &c. Ruth ii. 14, "And Boaz said unto her, At meal-time come thou hither, and eat of the bread, and *tinge* [*wet, moisten, season*] thy morsel in [or, *with*] the vinegar." 1 Sam. xiv. 27, "But Jonathan . . . . put forth the end of the rod that was in his hand, and *tinged* [or, dipped *for the sake of tinging, wetting, besmearing*] it in an honeycomb, and put his hand to his mouth;" *i.e.*, I apprehend, collected the honey from the besmeared part of the rod with his hand; and then *turned* his hand to his mouth, or thus ate the honey. 2 Kings v. 10, 12–14, "And Elisha sent a messenger unto him, saying, Go, and wash [Targ. Jonath., *utebol; tinge*, vel *intinge*] in Jordan seven times. Abana and Pharpar, ... may I not wash [Targ., *etebbol; tinxero*, vel *intinxero*] in them, and be clean? . . . . Wash, [Targ., ut supra,] and be clean. Then went he down, [to the river,] and *tinged* [*washed, purified*] himself seven times in Jordan." Job ix. 30, 31, "If I wash myself with snow water, and make my hands never so clean; yet shalt thou *tinge* [*besmear, bedaub, defile*] me in the ditch, [or, *with corruption, filth*] and mine own clothes shall abhor me." Ezek. xxiii. 15, "Girded with girdles upon their loins, exceeding in *tinged* [*dyed, coloured*] attire upon their heads."

I now appeal to impartial critics, and to common sense, whether the Hebrew word *tabal* is or is not a *generic term*, whose "*radical, primary*, and *proper* meaning" is, to *tinge*, to *dye*, to *wet*, or the like; which primary design is effected by *different modes* of application? The *mode* whereby the subject is affected with the liquid is *various:* either by applying the subject to the liquid, which is by dipping, immersing, overwhelming; or by applying the liquid to the subject, which is by aspersion, affusion, &c.

Now in regard of this *secondary* signification, it is not denied that the *most common* specific mode of application is by the motion of the subject to the fluid, whereby it is tinged, or wetted, in whole or in part, rather than by the motion of the fluid to the subject; but not the only exclusive mode, and therefore an accident only. By consulting the above passages we may observe, that *some* refer to that mode of application which most naturally requires the movement of the subject towards the tincture, &c.; that *some* leave the mode of application in a great measure *indifferent*; and that

some afford *irrefragable* evidence that the tinging liquid, &c., was moved and applied to the subject—as Lev. iv. 17, xiv. 16, and others, make it *probable* that this last mode was used.

Upon the whole it is indisputable that the *primary* meaning of the Hebrew word is to *tinge;* now, for any one to contend that this tinging is *synonymous* with dipping universally, as well as *used* synonymously, is no less false and absurd than that I should thus insist:—"The human body is *most commonly* WASHED (especially in hot countries) by plunging, and bathing in water; *therefore,* the body of neither man nor child can be *washed* or *anointed* without IMMERSION! Besides, the *most common* mode of DYEING, tinging, and staining is, and ever has been, by immersing the thing to be dyed, &c., in the tingent liquid; therefore, all the ancient Britons, who dyed or stained their bodies, must have PLUNGED themselves over head and ears into the *juice of woad,* to effect that purpose!" At this rate, a *dyer* (*βαφεύς, tinctor*) is nothing else but a *plunger!* A *washer* of clothes, according to Mr B.'s notion of the *primary meaning* of terms, is a *plunger* of clothes! And who can tell but some happy genius of this inventive age may find out a method of *white-washing* the ceiling of our rooms, or the walls of our houses, by *immersing* them in the washing liquid? and then he may be termed the *plunger* of our houses! Nay, reader, if the principles and reasonings of some people on this subject be right, the ancient Britons,—but who could have expected an argument in their favour from such a quarter, and from so curious a topic?—the ancient Britons were all Baptists (though not Antipædobaptists!) for, "Britanni TINXERUNT (*i. e., baptizaverunt*) se glasto."

§ 11. Having finished the first argument in support of the general proposition,—that *βαπτίζω* in its *primary* meaning is a *generic term* that does not necessarily or essentially include immersion, "from a comparative view of different renderings,"—let us proceed to the next argument deduced in favour of the same position:—

(SECOND,) From a view of some of those passages where the terms *βάπτω* and *βαπτίζω* refer to *other modes* rather than dipping.

Mr Parkhurst justly remarks, "That the writers of the New Testament—or rather, with reverence be it spoken, the Holy Spirit, whose penmen they were—wisely chose, in expressing evan-

gelical notions, to employ such *Greek* terms as had been long before used for the same purposes by the Greek translators of the Old Testament; and thus the *Septuagint* version became in this respect, not to the first age of the Church only, but also to all succeeding generations, the *connecting link* between the language of the Old and of the New Testament, and will be regarded in this view as long as sound judgment and real learning shall continue among men."* This remark, being indisputably founded on truth, shews clearly that the *Septuagint* version ought not to be overlooked in our inquiries after the genuine force of Greek terms in the New Testament. Nay, it must strike every sensible person, one would think, that this fountain of matter and expression from which the sacred penmen of the New Testament constantly drew, is of far greater consequence than the complete body of profane writers put together. Nor is it to the purpose to cite passages, as Dr Gale and others have done, where the *mode* of dipping anything in question is *included* in connexion with the truly "*radical, primary,* and *proper* meaning" of the term, which is to *tinge,* to *wet,* &c., as before shewn; for that conduct sophistically transfers the true state of the question from the *essentiality* to the *greater propriety* of immersion: which questions are totally distinct; and he that does not allow this deserves not to be reasoned with. The former concerns the very *existence* of what we deem valid; the latter, only the *preference* due to one *mode* rather than another.†

* Greek and English Lex., pref., pp. 6, 7.—This version "is very necessary for the understanding of the New Testament, there being several expressions therein which could not be well understood, was that sense to be put upon them which they commonly bear in *Greek authors,* and not that which they have in the *Septuagint.* They therefore that are desirous of understanding the true meaning of the books of the New Testament cannot be too often advised carefully and diligently to peruse the Septuagint version."—*Introduction to the Reading of the Holy Scriptures by Messrs Beausobre and L'Enfant, ap. Bishop Watson's Collection of Theological Tracts,* vol. iii., p. 252. See also Taylor's Key to the Apostolic Writings, § 314.

† "I cannot but observe the preposterous way which the Antipædobaptists take in filling several pages with quotations out of *secular* authors, where the word βαπτίζω is taken for such washing as is by dipping the thing washed into water. There are none of the Pædobaptists but what do grant and own, at the first word, that it is *often* used in that sense. And I think most of us do own that it is *oftener* found used so than in any other sense of washing; that *way* [or *mode*] of washing being used in the case of most things that happen to be spoken of. Now, when a debate stands so, that both sides do agree that in *secular* books a word is *often* used for *washing by* dipping, and there is no question made of that, but the only question between them is this, that one side affirms, but the

"In the Septuagint version of the Old Testament and the Apocrypha, which I have carefully examined," says Dr S., "the words occur twenty-five [he might have said *twenty-six*] times. *In eighteen of those instances,* Dr Gale says,—I think he might have said twenty,—*they undoubtedly mean to dip.* As to the remaining five, two of them respect Nebuchadnezzar, whose case we have considered. That in Isa. xxi. 4, clearly signifies *to overwhelm.* That in 2 Mac. i. 21, is best understood, and I think can only be properly understood, by referring to the primary idea of *dipping.* And that, Ecclus. xxxiv. 25, as it respects the Jewish purifications, can by no means be proved, as hath already been shewn, to exclude the notion of *plunging.*" *Carefully* as Dr S. hath examined the passages he refers to, I cannot help thinking but that they will admit of *re-examination,* and that the true account will be found *different* from the above statement. Towards a fair investigation let us observe—

§ 12. (First,) That of these *twenty-six* instances, only *four* are inflexions of the verb *βαπτίζω*; *two* of which are found in the Septuagint, and two in the Apocrypha. 2 Kings v. 14, "Then went he down [*i. e.,* to the water side] and [*ἐβαπτισατο*] *tinged* [*washed, purified*] himself in Jordan." Isa. xxi. 4, "My heart panted, fearfulness [*ἀνομία, iniquity*] [*βαπτίζει*] *tinges* me [*dyes,* with its influence and power, *impregnates,* as a fluid when it enters the pores.]" Judith xii. 7, "Thus she abode in the camp three days, and went out in the night into the valley of Bethulia, and [*ἐβαπτιζετο*] *tinged* [*cleansed, purified,* probably in a religious sense, *washed*] herself [or, *was baptized, cleansed,* &c., perhaps by an attendant] in a fountain of water by the camp, [*ἐν τῇ παρεμβολῇ ἐπι της πηγῆς του ὑδατος,* at the fountain of water within the camp.]" Ecclus. xxxiv. 25, "[*Ὁ βαπτιζομενος*] He that *tingeth* [purifieth, cleanseth, separateth ceremonially] himself after the touching of a dead body, if he touch it again, what availeth his washing?" (See Num. xix.)

other denies, that it is sometimes used for *other ways* of washing, as pouring, or rubbing water, &c., (to lump the matter by guess, say, three thousand times it be found used for *this* way, and one thousand times for the other ways;) what an idle thing is it for these deniers to bring *instances* of that which is confessed by both sides, instead of overthrowing or confuting the instances brought by the others for those other ways?"—*Wall's Defence, in Answer to Gale,* pp. 97, 98.

Now it is evident upon inspection, that each one of these four texts is perfectly consistent with what I maintain is the *primary* meaning of the word *βαπτίζω*; and, therefore, it is totally wrong to *confine* it, without the least necessity, to only *one mode* of that primary meaning: especially when we consider, that some, if not all, of these passages are *far more naturally* reduced to *other modes* of application, than to that of plunging.

(1.) 2 Kings v. 14. This is the only passage of the four, and indeed in the whole Bible, where *βαπτίζω* is rendered to *dip*. And how improbable it is that Naaman did *in fact* PLUNGE himself in the river, let the following remarks of a sensible writer be considered:—"Naaman, it is plain, expected that the prophet should have come and *stroked his hand* OVER THE PLACE, and recovered the leper, (see ver. 11.) Instead of this he bids him—'Go, and wash in Jordan SEVEN TIMES,' (ver. 10.) It is now inquired, whether he *plunged himself all over* seven times; or, whether he only *sprinkled* or *poured* water seven times upon [and thus *wetted*, and *rubbed his hand over*,] the *leprous place*. There is nothing in the *expression* by which the *command* is given, *λουσαι*, *wash*, to determine it; for this may be alike understood either of a *total*, or a *partial*,* washing; but there is a remarkable *circumstance* which seems to give it strongly for *the latter;* which is this. The prophet, in commanding him to wash SEVEN TIMES, alludes, no doubt, to the *manner* of cleansing the leper appointed by the Jewish law. Now there were *two ways* of applying water to the leper's body, enjoined by that law; both alike commanded, and necessary to his cleansing—viz., *bathing* [or, *washing the body* with water] and *sprinkling:* the former, *bathing*, to be used but *once;* the latter, *sprinkling*, to be done *seven times*. (See Lev. xiv. 7, 8.) When, therefore, the prophet bids him *wash* SEVEN TIMES, it is much *more natural* to understand it of *sprinkling*, or *pouring water*, SEVEN TIMES upon the *leprous part*, over which he expected the prophet should have *stroked his hand*, than of DIPPING *his whole*

* In proof of what our author here asserts, consult the following passages where the *same word* is used as Elisha employs when he delivers the Divine mandate, "Go and *wash:*"—Exod. xxx. 18-21; Gen. xliii. 24, 31; Exod. xxix. 17; 1 Kings xxii. 38; Job xxix. 6; Ezek. xvi. 4. Here one might ask, What is the *mode* of *washing* a new-born child? Or is a chariot *plunged* in a pool when it is *washed?* Or, when Job says, "I *washed* my steps with butter," is it natural to say he *immersed* them in it?

body seven times; of which kind of *washing* [*dipping*] there is not the least footstep nor shadow in the law."* To which we may add, that it is not likely Naaman should do *more* than the prophet *required*, since he was so reluctant to make any compliance; which he must have done on supposition that he *immersed* himself, since the command was only to *wash;* and *this* every one knows may be, and daily is, easily and commodiously done *without* immersion. When we consider also the *nature* of his disorder, and, as he could not be ignorant, the apparent unsuitableness, physically, of the prescription; it is not probable that he should go and *plunge* himself in deep water, since a gentle affusion was fully answerable to the requisition. Again; it is expressly said, that what he did was "*according to* the saying of the man of God"—*i. e.*, he *washed* in (or, used the water of) Jordan, though with haughty reluctance. But there is no single circumstance, without begging the question in debate, but favours the application of water TO *the leprous part*, rather than the application of that TO *the water:* not to mention the Vulgate version, and the renderings of the Syriac and Arabic versions, which read *lavit se*, which is by no means synonymous with *dipping*.

(2.) Isaiah xxi. 4. Instead of "fearfulness affrighted me," the Septuagint version reads, ἡ ἀνομία με βαπτίζει, "iniquity baptizes me." This rendering is very singular, and the passage is evidently metaphorical; the question is, to what does it *allude?* It should seem the lamentation is made by the king of Babylon; and the passage, as Mr Henry observes, "was literally fulfilled in Belshazzar; for that very night in which the city was taken, and himself slain, upon the sight of a hand writing mystic characters upon the wall, 'his countenance changed, and *his thoughts troubled him*, so that the joints of his loins were loosed, and his knees smote one against another,' (Dan. v. 6.) And those words, 'The night of my pleasure hath he turned into fear to me,' plainly refer to that aggravating circumstance of Belshazzar's fall, that he was slain on that night when he was in the height of his mirth and jollity, with his cups and concubines about him, and a thousand of his lords revelling with him,—that night of his pleasure when he promised himself an undisturbed, unalloyed enjoyment of the most exquisite gratifications of sense, with a particular defi-

* Towgood's Dipping not the only Scriptural and Primitive Manner of Baptizing, p. 19.

ance of God and religion, the profanation of the temple vessels;—that was the night that was turned into *all this fear.*"* I suppose few or none will deny the propriety of these remarks; and the manifest allusion is to the distressed and affrighted *condition* Belshazzar found himself in, owing to the displeasure and judgment of God. Now, the remaining inquiry is, What is the most likely *mode* of producing this effect? "Iniquity" (*i.e.*, by a metonymy, the *vengeance* due to it) "baptizes me," is the same as "I am baptized with iniquity," (or the Divine *displeasure* as the *penal* effect of it.) Now, there is no figure more familiar, more easy, more awfully beautiful and striking in the prophetic writings when the doom of enemies and daring offenders is described, than that of God's POURING OUT His *indignation*, (Ps. lxix. 24;) His *wrath*, (Ps. lxxix. 6;) His *fury*, (Jer. x. 25;) men's *wickedness* (*i.e.*, the *punishment* of it) upon them, (chap. xiv. 16.) Thus also, Ezek. vii. 8, "Now will I shortly POUR OUT my *fury* upon thee, and accomplish mine *anger* upon thee: and I will *judge* thee according to thy ways, and will *recompense* thee for all thine abominations." Isa. xliii. 25, "Therefore he hath POURED upon him the *fury* of His *anger*." Lam. ii. 4, "He POURED OUT His *fury* like fire." Dan. ix. 11, "Therefore the *curse* is POURED upon us," &c. The cup of God's *fury*, therefore, being *poured out* without mixture upon the impious monarch, may be considered as the *most usual, natural*, and *expressive* mode of bringing his mind into the *condition* described: "my heart panted; fearfulness *affrighted* me."† To which we may add, that an influx or communication from God, of a consolatory and merciful nature, is expressly styled "a *baptism.*" (See Matt. iii. 11, &c.; Acts xi. 15, 16.) Now, if the POURING OUT of God's *merciful* influence be properly called *baptizing* with that influence, for the like reason it must be equally proper to call the POURING OUT of His *punitory* and avenging influence a *baptizing* with that influence. Whereas, for *iniquity* or vengeance to *plunge* the offender *into a something not expressed*, as the contrary opinion supposes, is an idea equally inelegant, confused, and unusual in the sacred writings.

§ 13. (3.) Judith xii. 7. Independent of the force of the word

* Comment. in loc.

† Compare the following exclamation of the Roman orator:—"Dii immortales, qui me horror *perfudit!*"—*Cicero.*

in question, we have here several important *circumstances* that render it highly improbable that *immersion* is intended; and as these circumstances are concisely and properly put together by Mr Towgood, I shall give them in his own words:—"It is said, 'She went out, in the night, into the valley of Bethulia, and *washed,* (*καὶ ἐβαπτίζετο,*) and *was baptized,* in a fountain of water by the camp.' Did she DIP *her whole body* in this fountain of water? Yes, some earnestly contend; but utterly without *reason,* and against all *probability.* For as there appears to have been but this *single fountain* in the valley of Bethulia, at, close by, or around which (*ἐπι τῆς πηγῆς,* chap. vii. 3) an army of above *two hundred thousand soldiers* lay encamped, it is the height of absurdity [*cæt. par.*] to imagine that Judith in the night could, with any convenience or modesty, unclothe herself, and *plunge* her *whole body* therein; or if she could, in a country where water was both so much *needed* and so scarce, and so prodigious an army, with its infinite multitude of attendants and cattle, were to be continually supplied from it. When, therefore, it is said 'She was baptized in the camp, at the fountain of water,' (this is the exact rendering,) it may be left to any one to judge, whether she was *totally immersed,* or had the water applied only to a *part of her body.* This, then, must be accounted another very clear and *incontestable instance* where a person is said *to be baptized* without being *overwhelmed.*"* After all, supposing, without granting, that the *washing* here mentioned, whether for physical or ceremonial cleansing, was the whole body, that does by no means tend to confine the *mode* of it to *dipping;* for nothing can be plainer than that her *cleansing,* and not *immersion* for immersion's sake, was her *primary* business at the fountain; nor is it less evident that, though the washing were *total,* plunging would be so far from being *essential* to it, that it is at best only one specific *mode* of washing the body, or rather a very unimportant *circumstance* attending it. Again; is it probable that Judith, a woman of rank and beauty, and in so critical a situation, was not attended with the *waiting-woman* that she took with her to the camp of Holofernes, (see chap. viii. 33, x. 5, 6,) as well for company, the excursion being in the gloom of night, as for assistance in the lustration? Now, let common sense determine what was the most *natural, safe,* and *easy method* (for *necessity* is out of the question)

* Ut supra, pp. 17, 18.

of effecting the *main* and *only* purpose for which the modest females went to the *guarded* fountain, (chap. vii. 7.)

(4.) Ecclesiasticus xxxiv. 25, Ὁ βαπτίζομενος ἀπὸ νεκροῦ, "He that is baptized from [the pollution of] the dead." Here let it be observed—

[1.] That the writer's *allusion* is, it should seem, to the ceremonial *purification* enjoined Num. xix. after touching, or being anyhow polluted, with a dead body.

[2.] That it does not appear from the sacred rubric that the *purified* in this case had his purification effected by *any other mode* than by SPRINKLING the water of separation upon him by another person. For I have never seen it proved, nor am I convinced that it can be proved, that the command to "wash his clothes and bathe himself in water" extends to any other than the *sprinkler*, (Num. xix. 19, 21.) The water of separation is expressly termed (ver. 9) "a PURIFICATION for sin." And, again, (ver. 12,) it is said, "he shall PURIFY himself *with* IT," and "he shall be CLEAN." *

[3.] On supposition that the *sprinkled* as well as the *sprinkler* was enjoined to wash his clothes and bathe himself, it would be as improper, (*cæt. par.*,) nay absurd, to make that *bathing* synonymous with *dipping* as with *rubbing;* for the *former* is no more included in *ablution*, with reference to the human body, than the *latter*. And the word βαπτίζομενος, if the question be not meanly begged, should be no more rendered by "he that *dippeth*," than by "he that *rubbeth!*"

[4.] From the premises it appears *most probable* that the word βαπτίζομενος is here used synonymously with *purified* or *cleansed;* and that the PRIMARY idea is not the specific *mode* of purifying,

* It is very plain on the face of the history that the PURIFICATION was effected by SPRINKLING, which Mr Towgood thus expresses:—"This fully appears from verses 13, 20, where the person who had neglected this ceremonial purification is threatened to be *cut off*. For what? For not having *bathed his body?* Nothing like it. No, but in each distinct threatening *his guilt* is expressly made to consist in his *not having the* WATER OF PURIFICATION SPRINKLED upon him. And the apostle, it is observable, speaking of this very *same purification*, makes the efficacy of the ceremony to consist entirely in the SPRINKLING, without the least mention of *the bathing*. Heb. ix. 13, 'For if the blood of bulls and goats, and the ashes of an heifer [with which this *water of purification* was made] *sprinkling* the unclean, sanctifieth to the purifying of the *flesh*, [*i. e.*, so far sanctified the polluted as *externally* and *ceremonially* to purify or cleanse him,] how much more,' &c."—*Towgood's Treatise*, ut supra, p. 17.

whether sprinkling or washing, (to *plunging* it could not refer, if the allusion be to Num. xix., since the law of purification no more includes *that* than it does at most any other *mere circumstance* of bathing,) but to the *purification itself.* Therefore it is a GENERIC TERM, expressive of *ceremonial purification;* and the exact import seems to be, "He that is *purified* from [the pollution of] the dead."

§ 14. Having now examined *all* the passages in the Old Testament and Apocrypha where the term *βαπτίζω* occurs, I would here make one general remark—viz., That in *no one* passage out of the *four* is the word synonymous, or even used synonymously, with *immersion.* One of them is confessedly metaphorical, and alludes, as we have seen, to that state of mind which is the effect, according to the common language of Scripture, of God's *pouring out* His indignation and wrath on the guilty. The other three are evidently founded in the *Jewish purifications.* Naaman was a leper, and the mean of his cure, though not in all things conformable to the prescribed law of leprosy, was no other than a *purifying rite;* and his *baptizing* himself seven times in Jordan (though this mode of speaking by no means excludes the actual assistance of an attendant) amounts to neither more nor less than that he CEREMONIALLY WASHED, *cleansed,* or *purified* himself seven times *ἐν τῷ Ἰορδάνῃ, in* [or, *by means of*] *the Jordan;* which *washing* no more required that he should *plunge* himself, than that he should *rub* himself, or *swim* in the river. And should an objector still urge, that when the historian says he *baptized* himself, he meant that he *immersed* himself, and that *this* may be said to be "according to the saying of the man of God," because it *implies* the washing commanded; in reply to this, suffice it to observe, that it is in vain for him to *beg* what will never be *granted* him, that the "primary, radical, and proper meaning" of the Hebrew or Greek terms here used is to *immerse,* which is a specific act, rather than to TINGE, which is a *generic term;* and that, nearly with the same plausibility, another may insist that what the historian meant by the controverted term was Naaman's *wetting* or *rubbing* himself with water; his *swimming,* or putting himself to *soak* in the river; for each one of these *implies* the washing commanded. And, if it pleases him, he may go a step further, and with undaunted confidence insist upon it, that Naaman put himself in Jordan to SOAK, head and all, seven times; but *how long* he continued there is a

question which he will not perhaps choose to be confident in, but rather refer us to *inference* and *analogy!*

Again; when we consider the liableness of Judith to be ceremonially polluted every day during her residence in an idolatrous camp, what more probable than that her going nightly to the fountain to *baptize herself*, or to be *baptized*, was of the nature of a *ceremonial purification?* She went, therefore, to the fountain to be *purified*, or cleansed from the ceremonial pollution contracted in the day, which no more *required* plunging than swimming; and to say that in those circumstances she went *supra statutum*, merely because it is said she was *baptized*, is to sacrifice common sense to an indefensible hypothesis, and to impute *immodest folly* to the wisest woman in Israel, without producing one single argument or one ray of evidence in support of the charge, except it be that noble argument, that trusty foundation which has been the *sole support* of many a huge controversial fabric—*petitio principii; i.e.*, "baptizing IS plunging!"

§ 15. (Second,) The offspring, *βαπτίζω*, having been examined, and found totally silent about the *essentiality* of immersion, let us now proceed to examine the parent, *βάπτω*. And here it is observable, that of the *two-and-twenty* instances where this word is found, *not one* is inconsistent with its being, in its *primary* meaning, a *generic term*, signifying to TINGE; whereas in *six* instances at least, if I am not much mistaken, the specific notion of immersion is *excluded*.

It is well known that in whatever language *prepositions* are used, they have no small influence in determining the meaning of those words with which they are connected, and in many cases are quite decisive. For instance, were the subject of inquiry, how *general* and extensive, or how *particular* and confined, is the meaning of any word, the use of the prepositions connected with it will often decide. Suppose, for illustration's sake, we fix upon the English word *to move:* now in order to know that this is a *generic term*, I need only observe, that prepositions of various and even *contrary* influence and tendency may be consistently connected with it; as to move *in, with, by*, FROM, TO. For a thing may be *moved* FROM, as well as TO or *towards* another. But let any other word which is only a *species* of the genus *to move* be adopted, as *advance, proceed, withdraw, recede*, &c., its specific nature is easily discovered by the use of the prepositions. If, for example, we

find the words *withdraw* and *from* connected, the motion is specified as *retrograde;* but the words MOVE *from* do not specify it. Again, if we find the words *advance* and *to* connected, the motion is specified as *progressive;* but the words MOVE *to* do not specify it. Let us apply these remarks to the word in dispute. If prepositions of opposite and *contrary* tendency are found connected with it, this demonstrates that the genuine meaning cannot be that which is necessarily *confined* to *only one* uniform tendency—viz., that of the subject *towards* the fluid. If the particles employed, and the circumstances attending, convey to us the idea that the subject baptized is brought to that *baptized state* sometimes by the application of the fluid to the subject, and sometimes by the application of the subject to the fluid, it follows, that the *radical* and *primary* meaning is that which is *common to both.* The terms *to dip, plunge, immerse,* and the like, are expressive *only* of that confined and specific act which implies the motion and application of the subject *to the fluid;* consequently, they are *inadequate* to express the primary idea, being too partial and contracted.

If the most eminent lexicographers are right, when they tell us that the *primary* and *proper* meaning of *βάπτω* is *to* TINGE; and if our opponents are also right, when they assure us that its *primary* and *proper* meaning is *to immerse;* it follows that *tinging* and *immersing* are perfectly synonymous. But every one knows that immersion is only a *mode* of tinging, as before shewn; therefore, if the premises be true, the *mode* and the *thing modified* are perfectly the *same!* Or you are favoured, reader, with another curious but legitimate consequence: a person or thing may be said, properly and strictly, to be *dipped* when only *sprinkled, painted,* or anyhow *coloured!* It is in vain to urge, that because *dipping* is the *most usual* way of tinging, therefore it may be termed the *primary* meaning; for with the same propriety may a sophist exclaim—"The *primary* meaning of MOTION is *progression.* Ye boasted men of science, who have said so much about motion, ye are all deceived, and quite out in your definitions; for if you behold the planets in their courses, they all *proceed;* and so do the rivers of water *proceed* in their channels; man on his journey *advances* forward; the whole vegetable and animal creation observes the same plan; therefore, *retrogression*

is NO MOTION." Equally absurd is the conclusion, that the *frequency of one mode* of tinging *annihilates* all others.

§ 16. In Exod. xii. 22, we read, *Καὶ βαψαντες ΑΠΟ τοῦ αἵματος.* Lev. iv. 17, *Καὶ βάψει ὁ ἱερεὺς τὸν δάκτυλον ΑΠΟ τοῦ αἵματος;* xiv. 16, *Καὶ βάψει τὸν δάκτυλον τὸν δεξιὸν ΑΠΟ τοῦ ἐλαίου.* Dan. iv. 30, *Καὶ ΑΠΟ τῆς δρόσου τοῦ οὐρανοῦ τὸ σῶμα αὐτοῦ ἐβάφη*; and the same *verbatim*, chap. v. 21. And in Psalm lxviii. 23, we find, "That thy foot may be *tinged* in [or, *with*] the blood of thine enemies, and the tongue of thy dogs [may be *tinged*]" *ΠΑΡ' αὐτοῦ* (*scil. αἵματος.*)

Now let impartiality itself determine, whether these prepositions or the Latin ones corresponding, *a, ab, de,* or *ex,* are any way compatible with that *mode of tinging* which our opponents make *essential* to true baptism; and whether they do not *demonstrate* that the PRIMARY *signification* of the controverted word is not *to plunge,* but *to tinge, wet, stain,* or the like; and though immersion may be found the *most common,* because the most easy and commodious *mode* of tinging a variety of things, such as a *finger,* the *one end* of a *bunch of hyssop,* or the *end of a rod;* but when the *feet* are said to be *tinged at the brim* (*ἐβαφησαν εἰς μέρος**) of overflowing Jordan,—when *these,* as well as the *head,* through the abundance of oil, are to be anointed,—the *mode* of application becomes more ambiguous as to the *fact,* because more difficult to determine about the *natural propriety* of the action. If again the question be put, What is the most *natural* and the most *common mode* whereby the garments of a warrior are *tinged?* we can be at no loss for a reply. The *mode,* therefore, of accomplishing the primary thing signified *varies* according to the nature of the case.

§ 17. One thing more deserves particular notice, respecting the use of *βάπτω* in the Septuagint and Apocrypha. There are, if I remember right, but *two passages* in all these writings where a HUMAN BODY OR PERSON is said to be *tinged,* (*βαπτεσθαι,*) and both refer to Nebuchadnezzar, and are expressed in the very same words.† It should seem, then, that this case is of considerable importance, being the *only* one *in point,* as to the subject baptized,

* The Welsh translation is very emphatical:—"A *gwlychu* o draed yr offeiriaid, oedd yn dwyn yr arch, y'nghwrr y dyfroedd," (Josh. iii. 15.)

† Dan. iv. 38, v. 21.

within the limits of our present inquiry. Now the question is, what is the *primary* signification of the word ἐβάφη here used? Is it any one *specific* act of immersing in water, putting under water, sprinkling, or pouring water upon the subject? Or does it not rather refer to a *state of wetness* in which the body of the metamorphosed monarch was? Let Dr S. reply:—"The word ἐβάφη is not used to describe the *action* of the dew as *distilling* or *falling*, but to express the STATE of Nebuchadnezzar's body."* This I verily believe is the proper, radical, primary meaning of the controverted term; of which this passage is a striking proof. "Not the ACTION, but the STATE." If any *action* at all, it would be the distilling or falling of the dew, for there was no other; but it "describes the state Nebuchadnezzar was in," which has nothing to do immediately with *any action;* and consequently the word ἐβάφη does not, cannot describe *immersion*, which is as much *an action* as the falling of the dew. It is vain for Dr S. to foist in the salvo, "as it were,"—"which was, *as it were*, dipped or plunged in dew." For this was not a *figurative* baptism; it was a *real fact.* His body was *actually* in a *baptized state.* It was *tinged* or *wetted*, and therefore as truly *baptized* as anything of which we read.

The question now returns: *By what means* came the degraded monarch's body into this state? It must be owned this is only a *secondary* consideration; the *primary* is the *state*, no matter how effected. Yet it is necessary that this state should be introduced by *some* MODE *of application.* It must needs be that either the tingent liquid was applied *to him* or he *to it.* It could not be the latter, for there is no *motion* of his body from one position to another supposed, as is self-evident; nor was the baptism effected by his being put in a *river*, a *pool*, or a *bath*, which is equally clear; no, nor yet his being PUT IN *the dew;* for the *state* was effected *ΑΠΟ τῆς δροσου, from the dew*, or by the action of the dew upon him. Consequently, the tingent liquid was *applied to him;* and a MODE *of baptism* this as *opposite* and *contrary* to *dipping* as the points of east and west, or the ideas of action and reaction, can be. Thus, I think, it is "satisfactorily proved (if demonstration will *satisfy*) that in this one instance (and the *only* one which refers to a human *person* complexly under the word

* Remarks on the Christian Min. Reas., p. 43.

βάπτω in the Septuagint version or the Apocryphal writings) the idea of *dipping* is EXCLUDED from the word."

But Dr S. still objects:—"Now," says he, "it is very remarkable, as Dr Gale has largely shewn in his answer to Mr Wall, that the original Chaldee word, (*itstabbang,*) which is here rendered by *ἐβάφη, necessarily* implies dipping, as appears by the *constant* use of the word; and that it is by this Chaldee word the Jerusalem Targum renders the Hebrew, (*tabbal,*) Lev. iv. 6, which also *unquestionably* signifies to dip." And, he might have added, which *unquestionably* signifies to *tinge;* which last *as unquestionably* differs from *plunging,* as Dr S.'s *mode* of baptizing differs from that of his opponents. I think it has been sufficiently proved already that the *primary* meaning of the *Hebrew* word is not *to immerse,* but *to tinge,* to *bring to a state of wetness,* of *colour,* &c., in whole or in part; and because this principal *end* was more commonly accomplished by the *mode* of dipping, hence *that* secondary idea became more prevalent than any other. But I may venture to say, that it NEVER signifies to immerse *for the sake of immersion* in all the sacred writings, but the immersion is ALWAYS *for the sake of a higher end;* and therefore is only a *mode,* however common, of effecting that primary purpose. Nay, I will venture a step further, and affirm that in *some* of those places where the word occurs, immersion appears a *useless mode* of answering the main intention, since another would answer *better,* as in the case of *staining* Joseph's coat, &c.; and that in *other* places a mode diametrically opposite to immersion is plainly suggested by the preposition annexed, as before noticed; though, as to the nature of the thing intended, it might have been done either way. Therefore, that the Chaldee word in question should be rendered by the Hebrew *tabbal,* is so far from proving the point intended, that it is evidently *against* it.

§ 18. Respecting the *Chaldee* word,—"that it *necessarily* implies dipping, as appears by its constant use,"—we deny the fact. Nor has Dr Gale, or any one else, *proved* the position now mentioned. The general if not the universal suffrage of *lexicographers* of the first note, and *critics* of the highest reputation, is against him; the verdict of the most eminent *versions* is against him; and the *nature of the subjects* where the word occurs is against him.

Among others, do not Castellus, whose eulogy was that of literary greatness, pronounced by an able judge;* N. Fuller, so renowned for his critical researches; Pagninus, styled by one not inferior to himself, "A man most skilful in the Eastern languages;" † Buxtorf, whose very name reflects honour on Jewish literature; to which we may add, Leigh, Stockius, &c.,—do not these, I say, concur to pronounce and prove the word in question, both in the Hebrew and Chaldee form, to be a GENERIC TERM, by rendering it *tingere* and *colorare?* Is not *tinxit* the *primary* meaning? And is not this as different from immersion as *genus* from *species*, or *essence* from *mode?*

Mr Parkhurst, in his Lexicon, under the word, supposes, indeed, the *primary* sense of the *Hebrew* root to be—"*To form longish lines*, or *streaks*, or such as are *longer* than they are broad, (q. d., *oblongare*,) or *to be of an oblong shape.*" Hence he supposes that "as a noun (*estabbang*) it signifies a *finger* or *toe*, from its *longish* or *oblong* form;" that "as a noun or participle passive it denotes a *stripe* or *striped*, (Judg. v. 30;)" as a participial noun, "the *hyena*, so called from the dark *stripes* or *streaks* with which his colour is variegated." When he considers the word in the Chaldee form, he observes:—"In Aph., *to wet, moisten, imbue*, (Dan. iv. 22.) In Ith., *to be wetted*, (Dan. iv. 12, v. 21.) So the Vulg. renders it by *tingi, infundi, infici*, and the LXX. in the last passage by ἐβάφη."

The Assembly's Annotator on Jer. xii. 9 observes:—"The word here used, and not elsewhere found, cometh from a root, which though nowhere used in the Hebrew text of Scripture, yet is found in the Syriac of Daniel, (Dan. iv. 15, 23, 33, and ver. 21,) as also in the Syriac and Arabic versions of the New Testament, (Matt. xx. 23; Luke vii. 38.)" Now this last passage absolutely *excludes* immersion from the nature of the action. And as to the text in Matthew, the literal interpretation of the Arabic version is, *tinctura mea tingemini;* while the Syriac interpreter keeps to the Greek terms Latinized: "*Baptismate quo ego baptizor, baptizabimini.*" As to Dan. iv. 15, Montanus's interlineary version and the Vulgate render it by *tingo;* the Syriac version is interpreted by *intingo.* Ver. 23 is rendered by Montanus, "Ex rore cœlorum te tingen-

* Bishop Walton, in his Preface to the Polyglot:—"Virum in quo eruditio summa magnaque animi modestia convenere."

† J. Buxtorf, in Epist. Ded. to his Heb. Lex.:—"Vir Linguarum Orientalium peritissimus."

tes." The Vulgate :—"Et rore cœli infundêris." The Syriac, as before, by *intingo* :—"Rore cœli intingeris." Ver. 33, Mont. :—"De rore cœlorum corpus ejus tingebatur." Vulg. :—"Rore cœli corpus ejus infectum est." Syr. Interp. :—"Rore cœli intingendum." Sept., literal translation :—"De rore cœli corpus ejus infectum est." Arab. Interp. :—"Perfusum fuit corpus ejus rore cœli." And as to Dan. v. 21, Mont. :—"E rore cœlorum corpus ejus tinctum fuit." Vulg., as in the passage last mentioned. Syr. :—"Rore cœli corpus ejus intinctum." Sept., verbatim as in the last passage. Arab. :—"Perfusum est corpus ejus rore cœli." Let the reader now judge whether the "Chaldee word *necessarily* implies *dipping*, as appears by its *constant use!*"

It is well known that from this root is derived, as before observed, the participle, or participial noun, (*tsabuang*,) which is rendered in our present version "speckled." And perhaps there is not a word within the compass of sacred literature about the meaning of which there have been more critical conjectures among the learned. And yet among these endless conjectures I do not recollect one that conveys the idea of necessary immersion.*

Once more; it may be remarked, that the use of the *Hebrew* derivative, Judg. v. 30, which is rendered by the Sept. by a derivative from *βάπτω*, is not at all favourable to our opponents' hypothesis :—"To Sisera a prey of *divers colours*, [*tsebaim*, *βαμματων*,] a prey of *divers colours* [as before] of needlework, a prey of *divers colours* [*tseba*, *βαμματα*] of needlework on both sides."

* Some, as before hinted, and particularly Bochart, (De Animalibus Sac. Scrip., lib. iii., 11,) would, after the Septuagint, render the phrase which we read "*speckled bird*," a "*hyena*," or *variegated wild beast*. But of these there were two kinds—one a quadruped very much like a wolf, only *spotted;* and the other a serpent *speckled* under the belly; *cenchris*, or *serpens miliarius*. Others consider the word (*aith*) with which it is connected, and which is agreeable to our version, as meaning strictly a *bird;* and accordingly they express the force of the participle as agreeing with *avis* in some such terms as these: *tincta*, *colorata*, *picta*, *variegata*, *discolor*, *varicolor*, *versicolor*, *rubefacta*, sanguine *infecta*, *cruenta*, *cruentata;* *insolita*, *sylvestris;* *digitata*, *prælongis unguibus prædita*, *prædatrix*, *rapax*, *fera*, *carnivora*, &c. And were I to throw my mite of conjecture into the heap, it should be "*avis* NOTATA," which, in my apprehension, exhibits the most feasible and easy connexion between the very dissimilar derivatives; the one importing "*color*," or "*tinctura*," and the other "*digitus*." Who knows but in this age of discoveries it may be "largely shewn" and demonstrated, that the *bird* in question is neither a hawk, a kite, an eagle, or a peacock, (as some have conjectured,) but *avis* IMMERSA—a "*duck*," which is literally the *dipping* (or *dipped*) *bird*, from the Dutch "*ducken*" to *dip!*

But how would this passage read on the plunging plan? "To Sisera a prey of *plungings*, a prey of *plungings* of needlework, a prey of *plungings* of needlework on both sides, [or, more literally, a *plunging* of double embroidery!]" And here it is observable that while Mont. and the Vulg. render the word by *color* and *diversus color*, and the translations of the Sept. and Syr. by *tinctura*, the Chaldee Paraphrast, retaining the same word, in the Chaldee form (*tsibeonin*) is rendered by the Latin version *color*: "Prædam polymitarum colorum." That is,—if the Doctors Stennett and Gale are right in saying that the word "*necessarily* implies dipping,"—"*a prey of the embroideries of* DIPPINGS!"

It is not denied that the Chaldee word answers to *βάπτω*; but what we insist is, that the *primary* meaning of neither is to immerse. Sir Edward Leigh, after giving the import of the word thus, "*tinxit, intinxit,* colore vel humore *imbuit* seu *infecit, coloravit, lavit, madefecit, rigavit, baptizavit, immersit,*" observes from Fuller:—"The word among the Syrians primarily and properly signifies *βάπτειν,*—that is, either *immergere* or *tingere;* and because what is stained with any colour is made such *immergendo* sive *tingendo,* hence also it denotes *colorare;* just as *βάπτειν* and *tingere* among the Greeks and Latins comprise *both meanings.*"* Now, if a word signifies to *tinge* and to *immerse,* it is demonstrable from the case itself that the former is the *leading* and *primary* sense; for to immerse is a *mode* of tinging, but tinging cannot be called a mode of immersing. To deny this is to deny that the genus comprehends the species, or that the whole comprehends the parts. What Fuller suggests, that *to colour* is a *consequent* meaning, BECAUSE *effected* BY *plunging* or *tinging,* does not affect the question; otherwise the idea itself is controvertible. For, if some better reason be not assigned, he might as well have said, "*Travelling* is a consideration *consequent* to *walking* or *riding,* BECAUSE *that is effected* BY *these.*" That is, The *thing itself* is a consideration *consequent* to the *specific mode* or *manner* of effecting it!

But before I leave this branch of the subject, I would observe that the above remarks and reasonings on the controverted words, in proof that they are *generic terms,* must be in all reason considered in reference to the time, place, and occasion of using them. For there is a great deal of difference between the acceptation of

* Crit. Sacr.

words at one time, place, or occasion, and others. Therefore, no objection that may be formed against what I have said will affect it, though it were proved (what yet remains to be done) that the specific notion of dipping was of *more early date*, as conveyed by these terms, than the generic one of tinging; except it be also proved that the more general signification did not exist *at the time and place* of using the words. Whatever is done short of this will be justly deemed inconclusive, and mere logomachy.

§ 19. Having taken notice already of all those passages in the New Testament where the word *βαπτίζω* occurs, it will be needless as well as tedious to enter into a minute examination of them all. Instead of this, it will be sufficient, and perhaps more proper, to make the following observations upon them, in connexion with what has been already said.

(1.) Though I have, according to our opponents' constant wish, made *βάπτω*, as well as *βαπτίζω*, the subject of inquiry, yet, as the *former* is never, but constantly the *latter*, used in the New Testament when the sacred rite is in question, it is but reasonable to suppose that this uniformity is owing not to accident, but design; and if to *design*, it is equally reasonable to conclude that both terms, at least in the *legislative* sense, are *not synonymous*.

(2.) This being the case, it is but reasonable to infer that the use of the word *βαπτίζω* in the Sept. and Apocrypha, *rather* than *βάπτω*, should be regarded in ascertaining the sense of the former in the New Testament.

(3.) Inasmuch as *every instance* where the word occurs in these writings (Isa. xxi. 4 excepted, which is evidently figurative) is a species of *ceremonial* PURIFICATION, as before observed; and seeing to *purify* and to *baptize* are used synonymously, (Mal. iii. 3, and Mark i. 8;) and when we add to this the nature and design of the institution, the greater consistency of the rendering, of which let the impartial judge,—I think it natural to infer that the real legislative and sacramental force of the term is of a *general nature*, and by no means confined to one specific action; and that the words *purification* and *purify*, though not perfectly adequate, have a better claim on adequateness to express the meaning of the original than *immersion* and *immerse*, or any that convey the same idea.

§ 20. If we inquire by *what mode* this purification by water is *best* effected, I beg leave to reply in general, By the *application of*

water to the body, rather than by *applying the body* of the subject to the water. My reasons are as follows :—

First, Because, ὁ βαπτιζομενος, *the purified person*, all along, *from Moses to Christ*,* was ceremonially cleansed or *purified*, at least principally, by *that mode*. Num. xix. 12, "He shall *purify* himself with *it*." Ver. 13, "*Because* the water of separation was *not sprinkled upon him*, he shall be *unclean*." Ver. 20, "The water of separation hath *not been sprinkled upon him*, he is *unclean*." Nor is there any evidence that the *bathing* or *washing* the body with water referred to any but the administrator of the rite; and the rather because *he* had *no other* mode of purification left but this, whereas the other was *clean* by sprinkling. It is confessedly clear that he who *sprinkled* or even *touched* the water of separation was thereby rendered unclean. Now, if sprinkling was necessary for *his* cleansing, it must be equally so for *his* sprinkler, and so on, which is absurd. Therefore, the *ablution* was *necessary* for him, but *not necessary* for the other, any more than the *tent*, &c., after being sprinkled. And indeed supposing, without granting, that *both* bathed themselves, it still follows that the application of water to the subject for cleansing constituted the leading and principal part of the action.

Second, Because the διαφοροι βαπτισμοι, *the divers purifications*, which were in force *from Moses to Christ*, were performed at least *principally* by this mode. On this phrase, (Heb. ix. 10,) Dr S. has a very singular observation :—"As prophecy, teaching, ruling, &c., are the *different species* of the genus *gifts;* so the *various plungings*, of priests, Levites, and people, for consecration, defilement, &c., are the *different species* of the genus *dippings* or bathings." In support of this remark, so unworthy of Dr S., we are referred to Spencer, Grotius, and Whitby. But the sentiment must be untenable indeed if it has no better defence than what these authors afford. Nay, the very references are plump *against* it. For not only do they imply that the priests, Levites, and Israelites were *different subjects*, but also that the *washings* (βαπτισμοι) were *different* (διαφοροι); and, indeed, else they could not possibly be exculpated from palming on the apostle a contradiction in terms, as we shall presently see. The *priests* had *one*

* Be it observed, that *every person* who was legally purified from the touch of a dead body, &c., during that *long period*, was *baptized*. How *common* a thing, then, must *baptism* be among the Jews as a sacred rite!

mode of purification by water: Exod. xxix. 4, "And Aaron and his sons thou shalt bring unto the door of the tabernacle of the congregation, *and thou shalt* WASH *them with water.*" The *Levites* had *another mode*: Num. viii. 5–7, "And the Lord spake unto Moses, saying, Take the Levites from among the children of Israel, and *cleanse* them. And thus shalt thou do unto them, to cleanse them: SPRINKLE *water of purifying upon them.*" And the *people* when defiled had *another mode:* Lev. xv. 5–8, 16. Here the unclean is commanded to "*bathe himself* in water," or to *wash himself.** The words of Spencer are—"*Alia* enim erat Pontificis et sacerdotum *lotio, alia* Levitarum, Israelitarum *alia,*" &c.—*De Leg. Heb.*, lib. iii., dissert. 3. And those of Grotius—"*Varias lotiones* nominat, (Heb. ix. 10,) quia *lotio alia* erat sacerdotum, *alia* Levitarum," &c. And Dr Whitby upon the place refers to the above texts in proof of the *washings* being *divers.* But how can these authorities or these sacred texts contribute in the least degree to establish Dr S.'s unaccountably strange notion of genus and species, when he says that "the various *plungings* of priests, Levites, &c., are the *different species* of the *genus dippings* or bathings?" As this doctrine, peculiar to a tottering hypothesis, stands already confuted and justly exposed in a publication which Mr B. has *cautiously* overlooked, (perhaps out of *tenderness* for himself and his *cause,*) and to which Dr S. has thought proper to make no reply, (we suppose for a very *substantial* reason,) I beg leave to present the reader with the following strictures from that *unanswered* performance:—"According to the Doctor, *dippings* are the *different* species of the genus *dippings.* Small as my acquaintance is with the doctrine of *genus* and *species,* yet I know there is between the several species contained in the genus what logicians call *differentia.* Thus a *man* and a *brute* are different *species* of the genus *animal;* and that which constitutes the *difference* between these species is *rationality.* But where is the logical *differentia* between *plungings* and *dippings,* unless the Doctor will contend that a variation in *terms* makes it? Indeed he seemed aware that to affirm *dippings* are the species of *dip-*

* "They had *washings* also—of the inwards, (Exod. xxix. 17,) and of the burnt-offerings peculiarly, (Ezek. xl. 38,) of the hands and feet of the priests, (Exod. xxx. 18,) and of the leper, (xiv. 9.) Βαπτισμὸς is *any kind of washing,* whether by dipping or sprinkling—*putting the thing* to be washed into the water, or *applying the water* unto the thing itself to be washed. Of these washings there were various *sorts* or *kinds* under the law."—*Dr Owen* in loc., vol. iii., pp. 351, 352.

pings, would incur manifest absurdity, and therefore he artfully varied his phraseology. But such little artifices as these are easily seen through, and help to detect the fallacy and evasion which frequently lurk under them.

"Let us see how he applies his reasoning to the use of the word in Rom. xii. 6. Mention is made there of *differing gifts,* διάφορα χαρίσματα, and those gifts are specified—such as *prophecy, exhortation, ruling,* &c. Upon this the Doctor argues thus:—'We might with good reason argue *analogically* from this other passage in Romans, and say, that as *prophecy, ruling,* &c., are the different species of the genus *gifts,* so the various plungings are,' &c. But, according to our author's mode of reasoning, the analogy is *destroyed.* If, according to the Doctor, διάφοροι βαπτισμοὶ signify cleansing of different *persons,* then, in order to preserve a just *analogy,* διάφορα χαρίσματα ought likewise to mean gifts dispensed to different *persons.* But the absurdity of inference in the latter case clearly exposes the fallacy of conclusion in the former. Χαρίσματα, gifts, are the *genus,* whose *species* are *prophecy, ruling,* &c. Each of these is a species, each is *different* from the other, and both are contained in the *genus.* But, according to our author's doctrine of genus and species, if only *one* of these (*prophecy,* for instance) had been given to 'various *persons,*' to the pastors, deacons, people, still χαρίσματα, gifts, would have been the genus, and *one* of these gifts conferred on 'various *persons*' would have been the species; and thus *prophecies* would have been the species of *prophecies,* without any *difference* whatever! for the difference would respect the *persons* on whom they were bestowed, and not the things given.

"Another instance will expose it still more. In Lev. xix. 19, the Lord commands His people not to sow their fields with *mingled seed,* οὐ κατασπερεις διάφορον, *diverso semine,* (Lat. Vulg.*) The Greek word is the same here as in Hebrews and Romans, and signifies a difference in the species of seed; a *mingling* of which was prohibited under the law. But, by our author's mode of accommodating the doctrine of genus and species, though the Jews had used *one* unmingled seed, yet if they deposited it in various *fields,* or upon various 'occasions,' they would have equally violated the Divine injunction; because, although there was not the least

* Other Latin versions have it, *diversis speciebus, ex duabus speciebus, commixtione seminum, mistionibus,* &c.

difference between the pure seed sown in one piece of ground, and the *same* deposited in another, yet, according to the Doctor's idea, there would have subsisted a *difference* between these species of seeds, only because of the different *fields* to which they had been committed. After the same absurd manner does he reason about the *divers baptisms* under the law. The priests, he says, were *dipped* in water, the Levites were *dipped,* and the people were *dipped.* And where is the *difference* between *dipping in water,* and—*dipping in water?* 'Oh, but different *persons* were dipped!' But how does a difference in the *persons* constitute a difference in the *thing,* when [on the supposition] the mode of applying the water was the *very same* to priests, Levites, and people? I need not inform the judicious reader, that the whole of the Doctor's reasoning, which seems perfectly new, amounts to this—viz., that a genus may have different species, and that there may be *no real difference* at all between these different species [or even between the *genus* and *species*] (which is a contradiction in terms) no more than between *plungings* and *plungings!"**

But wonders never cease. Who could think it? from this very phrase, "divers washings," Dr Gill fetches an argument for—*dipping!* "Called *divers,"* says the Doctor, "because of the *different persons* and *things* washed or dipped, as the same Grotius observes; and not because of *different sorts* of washing, for there is but *one way* (!) of washing, and that is by *dipping!"* But Grotius observes no such thing, as his words declare. And whether the other parts of this curious piece of dogmatism be not either already refuted in the refutation of Dr S., or else too palpably gross and unguarded to impose on any one possessed of common sense, let the intelligent reader judge.

I know it has been suggested "that though these washings were *divers,* they were not *diverse."* But whether this English criticism be not *merely* such, and totally unsupported by the original, may appear, in addition to what has been said, by the following remarks from no mean writer:—"All who understand the original know that the words do and *must* mean DIVERSE SORTS *of baptisms,* or baptisms of different *species* or *kinds.* It is not said πολλοις, *many,* nor ποικιλοις, *various,* but διάφοροις, DIVERSE, or DIFFERING SORTS. The *only* place in the New Testament where the

* Mr De Courcy's Rejoinder, pp. 204, 205, &c. See also Ikenius, Antiq. Heb., par. i., cap. xviii., § 9.

word (διάφορος) is used, besides this, is Rom. xii. 6: where by διάφορα χαρίσματα, *differing* or DIVERSE *gifts*, is indisputably meant several *differing* KINDS *of gifts;* as the words following demonstrate—viz., *prophecy, teaching, ruling*, &c. Should, then, a person now say, That *there is* NO *baptism but by dipping*, he would most plainly and undeniably CONTRADICT the *apostle;* for he would hereby affirm, that there is but ONE KIND of baptism; whereas the apostle declares there are MORE KINDS than *one.** Yea, that the apostle has in this place a more particular regard to the Jewish *sprinklings* than *dippings*, seems highly probable (to say the least) from his express mention of the *sprinklings* (ver. 13) as some of the *principal* of those legal PURIFICATIONS, or *differing baptisms*, concerning which he had spoken, ver. 10. If any shall imagine that the baptizing of *cups, pots, tables, human bodies*, &c., is meant by these *diverse baptisms*, the reply is obvious. These (if they must be all *dipt* in order to their being *baptized*) can with no truth or propriety be called *diverse* or *differing kinds* of baptisms; for they are then but *one* and *the same* baptism of *differing things.*

"Here, then, is FULL PROOF that the Scripture uses the word βαπτισμὸς, *baptism*, in so GENERAL and large a sense, as evidently to comprehend *sprinkling*, if not chiefly to intend it. *Sprinkling*, then, in the judgment of an *inspired writer*, is an authentic and DIVINELY-INSTITUTED MANNER *of baptizing.*"† To this I will add, that it is with *consummate prudence* our opponents, while consulting the safety and reputation of their cause—the ESSENTIALITY of *dipping*—slightly pass over, or at least very *tenderly* touch, this passage.

§ 21. Third, Proceed we now to a *third* reason assignable in favour of *applying water* to the subject, rather than putting the subject in the water—viz., Because *this mode* preserves the most striking conformity to the mode of application in the *baptism of*

* "Concerning the sense of the word διάφορος, *diverse*, see also Wisd. vii. 10, διάφορας φυτῶν, diversities, or DIVERSE SORTS, of plants. Dan. vii. 19, θηρίον διάφορον παρὰ παν θηριον, *a beast of a* KIND (or SPECIES) DIFFERENT *from all other beasts.* So the word διάφοροτερος is twice used in this same epistle: Heb. i. 4, and viii. 6, [the only places in the New Testament where it is found;] in both which places it signifies, of a very *different kind:* a *name* of a very *different kind;* and a *ministry* of a very *different kind* from theirs."

† Towgood's Dipping not the only Scriptural and Primitive Manner of Baptizing, pp. 6–8.

the Spirit, of which water-baptism is but the external sign. For whether we consider the Divine influences in a miraculous or sanctifying view, whether we refer to the mode of conferring *gifts* or *graces*, it is both scriptural and rational, and supported by *universal analogy*, that *man* (if he be allowed to be at all the subject of supernatural influences) should be regarded as the *recipient* or passive *subject*. There is no alternative. The *application*, if there be any at all, must be either from heaven to earth, or from earth to heaven. But the new birth is *from above* (ἄνωθεν); the gift of the Spirit was *poured out on* the Gentiles; the disciples were endued with Divine power *from on high* (ἐξ ὕψους.) "As the apostle Peter says that the Gentiles were *baptized* when the Holy Ghost *fell on* them, so we assert that water *poured out* or *falling upon* the person to be baptized constitutes a real baptism; and that the terms therefore admit a synonymous analogy. And the same mode of analogical reasoning we adopt, from the words of the prophet Joel, (chap. ii. 28,) quoted by Peter in Acts ii., and compared with verse 33 of that chapter. The Lord promises by the *prophet* that He would '*pour out* His Spirit on all flesh.' The fulfilment of this promise is attested by the *apostle;* who uses the very same word to express the *baptism* of the disciples on the day of Pentecost. If ever, therefore, the force of analogical argument be allowed, surely it ought in the present striking instance. And if it be admitted, then the following argument, in favour of baptizing by *effusion* of water, is irrefragable—viz., If, according to the correspondent testimonies of Joel and Peter, the apostles were *baptized* by the *pouring out* of the Spirit, then persons may, with scriptural propriety, be baptized by the *pouring out* of water."*

On the other hand; though we allow immersion to be a *mode* of baptizing, yet we assert that in this very important particular it has no countenance from the principal thing signified. The *principal* thing signified in baptism, as before shewn, (Chap. II.,) is the communicated influence of the Spirit of grace; but the mode of immersion is a very inadequate and unsuitable representation thereof. Again; if we make dipping anything else than a *mode* of ceremonial cleansing, that is, of baptism, and maintain, as our opponents do, that the very *essence* of the rite consists in the *act of dipping*, we necessarily deprive the baptismal element of every

* Mr De Courcy's Rejoinder, p. 147.

degree of analogical signification. For on that supposition, what must the watery element signify? If the *nature* of the ordinance be a *burial*, the *water* represents "THE HEART OF THE EARTH,"—the dull grave. Here is, then, nothing left to represent the *communication of influences*, or the *application of grace* to the person. Here is no analogical reference to the blood and merits of Christ. But can any one, who is in the least acquainted with the language of inspiration, hesitate a moment to determine whether the *water* does not more fitly and scripturally represent the BLOOD AND SPIRIT of Christ, than HIS GRAVE? And if the *former*, we appeal to every principle of Scripture analogy and common sense, as well as to the nature and design of this ordinance, whether *that mode* of applying the significant purifying element for which I contend be not the *most expressive?* But if any object, that *sprinkling* or *pouring*, or any mode of *applying* water to only a *part* of the body, is an insufficient emblem of a *complete purification*, he would only cavil against Divine appointments, being wise above what is written. For the blood of Christ *sprinkled on the heart* represents a *complete purification.* And both men and things have been pronounced ceremonially *clean* when only *sprinkled;* and this very mode was instituted by Wisdom itself to represent *moral purification.*

The trite and frivolous objection, "That there was no rite under the Mosaic economy which enjoined the sprinkling of *pure water*," hardly deserves an answer. For we have no dispute about the *nature* of the element; this the records of the New Testament fix without controversy: our analogical allusion, therefore, is not to the *purifying liquid*, whether *water* pure or mixed, or *blood*, or *oil*,* &c., but to the *mode of application.* To which we may add, Ezek. xxxvi. 25, "Then [under the reign of the Messiah] will I SPRINKLE CLEAN WATER upon you, and ye shall be CLEAN: from *all* your filthiness, and from *all* your idols, will I CLEANSE you."

§ 22. Fourth, There is no passage in the New Testament,—

* Christ's being baptized with *water* represented His being baptized with the *Spirit*, in an extraordinary manner; which took place when the heavens were opened unto John, "and he saw the Spirit of God *descending* like a dove, and *lighting upon Jesus.*" And this baptism of the Spirit is likewise called His ANOINTING: Ps. xlv. 7, "God, thy God, hath ANOINTED thee with the OIL *of gladness* above thy fellows." And this anointing was done by POURING the oil: Exod. xxix. 7, "Then shalt thou take the anointing oil, and POUR *it upon his head*, and *anoint him.*"

I will not say that *confines* the mode of purifying to immersion,—but from which it can be fairly deduced (*cæt. par.*) that immersion was *at all* used. In addition to what has been said already, I would only observe, that if any passage in the New Testament gives countenance to the notion that dipping was the apostolic practice, it is Rom. vi. 4, (to which is added Col. ii. 12.)

Now to suppose that the apostle alludes to the *manner* of dispensing the ordinance is to enervate his argument, and in fact to make it no argument at all. For how could the circumstance of their being *plunged, oblige* them to a holy life, which is the scope of the passage? Or how can a supposed transient conformity to the position of our Lord's body in the grave, or, indeed, any other corporal posture, *oblige* to mortify sin and cultivate holiness? If it be said that the putting of the body in water, in conformity to the putting of Christ's body in the cave, obliges in virtue of a Divine appointment, it is but meanly to beg the question. We deny that there is any evidence for such an appointment in preference to every other mode of application. Our opponents must make the apostle argue to this effect:—"Your *bodies*, brethren, in baptism must have been in the same posture as the body of Christ in the grave, *therefore* let your old man be buried; for *this* has put you under a strong *obligation* so to do." How trifling the supposition!

Again; the true *antithesis* of the passage is destroyed by the other interpretation: that, being *buried with him*, we may walk in newness of life, as Christ was *buried* and *raised up* by the glory of the Father. Now to "walk in newness of life" is a *moral* concern, answering to the resurrection and ascension of Christ; consequently, if there be any propriety in the antithesis, "to be buried with Christ in baptism" must be a *moral* concern, answering to the death and burial of Christ. Here are two things alluded to, which are *both alike external* circumstances of our Lord's person; with what propriety, therefore, must the allusion in the apostolic argument be *different?* Why should His *rising* represent a *spiritual* newness of life, but His *burial* represent a *corporal* posture in the water?

Besides; if there be not this uniformity maintained, there is no completeness in the apostle's argument, but it is evidently defective on this account—that we are *not obliged* "to newness of life" in virtue of union to the *risen Saviour*, but in virtue of conformity to

the *buried Surety*. Now who does not see the defect and glaring impropriety of such an argument? For, on this supposition, plunging is *exclusively* the ALL of baptism; the *raising* of the body being an action of a *contrary* nature. For baptism must signify either *dipping and raising again*, or it must signify *dipping* solely and exclusively, If the *former*, the main part of the controversy is given up, for then *βαπτίζω* is not synonymous with *dipping, plunging, immersing*, or the like; if the *latter*, then, according to Mr B.'s excluding maxim, the subject *dipped* should not be *raised*, for the term signifies neither more nor less than *to dip*, and "positive laws exclude their negative;" nor should we in any part of a positive institute venture "*supra statutum.*"

Moreover; if the dictates of the law of nature be excluded from this ordinance, and if baptism be nothing more nor less than plunging, *baptizing* must be in many cases tantamount to *drowning!* However our opposers affect to discard inference and analogy from positive institutions, is it not well for numbers that the baptizer adheres *in practice* to what he renounces *in speculation?* Is not this the reason perhaps that you, if you have been plunged in baptism, see the light of day, and enjoy the blessings of protracted life? For your baptizer, *on his own principles*, might have safely left you in the watery grave, and thus justify his proceeding:—"I am *certain* that to *baptize* is to *dip* all over in water, but am not sure that it ever signifies to *raise up;* it is, therefore, better to keep to the surer side, lest I should be guilty of will-worship, or be wise above what is written. Besides, the apostle expressly declares we are 'buried *into death;*' surely he cannot be guilty of abusing language, and insulting logic, in such a manner, when speaking of death and burial in the same sentence, as to refer the term 'death' to the *soul*, but the term 'buried' to the *body*. Therefore, if the *burial* be *literal*, why not the DEATH?"

Once more; the being *buried* into death, and *planted* in the likeness of His death, are *opposed* to *walking in newness of life*, and *being in the likeness of His resurrection;* and they are not only opposed, but consequentially *connected*. If *we have been planted, we* SHALL BE *raised*. That is, on plunging principles, *if* we have been *immersed*, we *shall be* raised in newness of life, in the likeness of Christ's resurrection. And so this interpretation brings us at length to the Popish tenet, that sacraments have

a saving influence, *ex opere operato*, from bare performance! But how different from the apostle's real design, which was to urge the mortification and burial of sin from the doctrine of mystical union to Christ and communion with Him! which union, in its most general and extensive nature, is represented in baptism. Now this union extends to His *incarnation, life, crucifixion*, &c., as well as to His death and burial, resurrection and ascension; but the reason why the apostle instances the latter was, not that baptism did not exhibit the *other part* of the Surety's undertaking,—an union to which is equally the believer's privilege,—but because the renunciation of sin, and the prosecution of holiness, represented in *that connexion and form of speech*, better subserved the *moral purposes he had in view*.*

* Thus Dr Owen on this subject, who was no *superficial* expositor of the sacred oracles on *other* subjects:—"The apostle (Rom. vi. 3-5) is dehorting from sin, exhorting to holiness and new obedience, and gives this argument from the necessity of it, and our ability for it, both taken from our initiation into the virtue of the death and life of Christ expressed in our baptism; that by virtue of the death and burial of Christ, we should be dead unto sin, sin being slain thereby; and by virtue of the resurrection of Christ, we should be quickened unto newness of life, as Peter declares, 1 Pet. iii. 21. Our being *buried* with Him, and our being planted together in the likeness of His death, and likeness of His resurrection, is the same with 'our old man being crucified with him,' (ver. 6,) and the destroying of the body of sin, and our being raised from the dead with Him; which is all that is intended in the place. There is not one word, nor one expression, that mentions any resemblance between dipping under water and the death and burial of Christ, nor one word that mentions a resemblance between our rising out of the water and the resurrection of Christ. Our being buried with Him by baptism into death, (ver. 4,) is our being planted together in the likeness of His death, (ver. 5.) Our being planted together in the likeness of His death, is not our being dipped under water, but the crucifying of the old man, (ver. 6.) Our being raised up with Christ from the dead, is not our rising from under the water, but our walking in newness of life, (ver. 4,) by virtue of the resurrection of Christ, (1 Pet. iii. 21.) That baptism is not a sign of the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ, is clear from hence—because an instituted sign is a sign of the *gospel grace participated*, or *to be participated*. If dipping be a sign of the burial of Christ, it is not a sign of a gospel grace participated: for it may be where there is none, nor any exhibited." Again:—"That interpretation which would enervate the apostle's argument and design, our comfort and duty, is not to be admitted. But this interpretation, that baptism is mentioned here as the sign of Christ's burial, would enervate the apostle's argument and design, our comfort and duty; and therefore it is not to be admitted. The *minor* is thus proved; the argument and design of the apostle, as was before declared, is to exhort and encourage unto mortification of sin and new obedience, by virtue of power received from the death and life of Christ, whereof a pledge is given us in our baptism. But this is taken away by this interpretation; for we may be so buried with Christ, and planted into the death of Christ by dipping, and yet have no power derived from Christ for the crucifying

§ 23. (THIRD,) We now proceed to inquire whether the verdict of very eminent literary characters does not corroborate the doctrine contained in our general thesis—viz., That *baptize* and *baptism*, at least when sacramentally used, are *generic terms*:—

(1.) Witsius:—"The sacred rite consists [1.] in the *application of the water to the body* of the person to be baptized; [2.] in pronouncing a certain form of words. We are not to suppose that immersion is so necessary to baptism as that it cannot be *duly* performed *by perfusion* or *aspersion*; for both pouring and sprinkling are *defensible*. And though we could find out for certain that the apostles dipped, it does not thence follow that they *always* observed this method. It is *more probable* that the three thousand who were baptized in one day (Acts ii. 41) had the water poured or sprinkled on them, than that they were dipped; for it is not likely that men, so much employed in preaching the word as the apostles were, could have leisure for so tedious and troublesome a work as the immersion of so many thousands. Nor is it probable that Cornelius, and Lydia, and the jailer, who, with their families, were baptized in private houses, had baptisteries at hand in which they could be totally immersed. Vossius (Disput. i. De Baptis., th. ix.) produces *instances* of perfusion from antiquity. *Βαπτίζειν* is *more generally* used for any kind of ablution, as Luke xi. 38. Dominicus a Soto, therefore, (Distinct. iii., quest. un. art. 7,) says well,—'In baptism there is something that concerns the *essence* of it, as *ablution*, according to Eph. v. 26, where the apostle calls *baptism* "the washing of water;" but something is *accidental*—to wit, that the ablution be done *by this or the other mode*.'"—*Œcon. Fœd.*, lib. iv., cap. xvi., § 12, 14.

(2.) Calvin:—"Whether he who is baptized (*qui tingitur*) be dipt, and that thrice or once, or whether he be only *sprinkled* with water poured on him, *it matters not in the least*. . . . . Then the minister *pours* (*effundit*) water on the child, saying, 'N., I *baptize* thee,'" &c.—*Institut. Christ. Relig.*, lib. iv., cap. xv., § 19. *Tract. Theol., De Form. Sacram. Administ. in usum Eccles. Genev., Oper.*, tom. viii., p. 34. Ed. Amstel., 1667.

(3.) Limborch:—"It may here be asked, whether immersion be so necessary as that there is no baptism without it? *Ans.*, It *does*

of sin, and for the quickening of us to obedience."—*Dr Owen's Tract on Infant Baptism and Dipping, ap. Collect. of Serm.*, p. 581. [Vol. xvi., pp. 267, 268, Johnstone & Hunter's Ed.]

not seem to be so necessary. Baptism is *duly administered by sprinkling* only. There are not wanting arguments to prove that baptism was, even in the first ages of Christianity, administered by sprinkling; for, as some argue, it is not at all unlikely but that among the three thousand converted and baptized, (Acts ii. 41,) there were some women, and the promiscuous dipping of them into water with the men would have been against the rules of decency and modesty; therefore it is *more probable* that they were baptized *by sprinkling* or *pouring on* of water, than that they were immersed or dipped into it. Besides, say they, it is incredible that there should be in Jerusalem, especially in the place where Peter preached, such a quantity of water at hand as was sufficient for the immersing of so great a number of converts. Let this be as it will, baptism, we say, is DULY ADMINISTERED BY SPRINKLING only."—*Complete Syst. of Div.*, book v., chap. xxii., § 2; Mr Jones's Translation.

(4.) Turretinus:—"The term *baptism* is of Greek origin, deduced from the word *βάπτω*, which is *to tinge* and *imbue; βαπτίζειν, to dye*, and *to immerse*. But because almost everything is wont to be *dipped* and *tinged that it may be* WASHED, and they who are immersed are wont to be *cleansed*, hence it comes to pass, that, as among the Hebrews *tabal*, which the LXX. translate *baptize*, (2 Kings v. 14,) is also taken for *rachatz*, which is *to wash;* so among the Greeks the word *βαπτίζειν*, by a metalepsis, is taken for the same, [*to wash*]—Mark vii. 4, 'When the Jews come from the market, *they eat not, except they* wash,' *ἐὰν μὴ βαπτίσωνται*. Nor ought we otherwise to understand the *baptisms* of cups, of pots, and of beds, in use among the Jews; and the *divers baptisms* enjoined upon them, (Heb. ix. 10;) and the superstitious *washings* received from the tradition of the elders, (Mark vii. 4, 5.) Hence the Pharisees, *on that account*, are called by Justin, *baptists*."—*Instit. Theol.*, loc. xix., quæst. xi., § 4.

§ 24. (5.) Dr Owen:—"*Βαπτίζω* signifies *to wash;* as instances out of all authors may be given: Suidas, Hesychius, Julius Pollux, Phavorinus, and Eustachius. No one instance can be given in the Scripture wherein *βαπτίζω* doth *necessarily* signify either to dip or plunge. *βαπτίζω* may be considered either as to its original, *natural sense*, or as to its *mystical use* in the ordinance. This *distinction* must be observed concerning many other words in the New Testament, as *ἐκκλησία*, *χειροτονία*, and others,

which have a *peculiar sense* in their mystical use. Wherefore in *this* sense, as the word is applied unto the ordinance, the sense of [the essentiality of] dipping is utterly excluded. And though as a mere external *mode* it may be used, provided the person dipped be naked, yet to urge it as *necessary* overthrows the nature of the sacrament. For the original and *natural signification* of it, it signifies to *dip*, to *plunge*, to *dye*, to *wash*, to *cleanse*. I have not all those [authors] quoted to the contrary. In the quotations of them whom I have, if it be intended that they say it signifies to dip and not to wash, or to dip ONLY, there is neither truth nor honesty in them by whom they are quoted. Scapula is one, a common book; and he gives it the sense of *lavo, abluo*—to *wash*, and *wash away*. Stephanus is another, and he expressly in sundry places assigns *lavo* and *abluo* to be also the sense of it. In Suidas, the great treasury of the Greek tongue, it is rendered by *madefacio, lavo, abluo, purgo, mundo*. I must say, and will make it good, that no honest man who understands the Greek tongue can deny the word to signify to *wash*, as well as to *dip*."—*Complete Collect. of Serm. and Tracts*, pp. 580, 581, [vol. xvi., pp. 266, 267. Edin. Ed.]

(6.) Lightfoot:—"The application of water is necessary for the *essence* of baptism; but the application in *this* or *that* MODE indicates a *circumstance*. To denote this ablution by a sacramental sign, the *sprinkling of water* is equally sufficient as *immersion into water*, since the *former* in reality argues an ablution and purification AS WELL AS the *latter*."—*Hor. Hebr. in Matt.* iii. 6.

(7.) Vossius:—"But from the *other* import, whereby *βαπτίζειν* signifies *abluere*, [to *wash* or *purify*,] it is transferred to the gift of the Holy Spirit; that is to say, because, that He might *wash* [or purify] the soul, He is *poured out* on it, *as water* is poured: even as Joel speaks, chap. ii. 28; and from thence Peter, Acts ii. 17; likewise Paul, Tit. iii. 6."—*De Baptis.*, disput. i., p. 344.

(8.) Beza:—"The reality of *baptism* is the *sprinkling of the blood* of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins and the imputation of His righteousness, which are as it were displayed before our eyes in the sign of *outward sprinkling*. Are they, therefore, improperly baptized, who are sprinkled with water only cast on them? No. What is in that action [of baptizing] merely *substantial*, [or strictly essential,] to wit, the ablution of water, is rightly observed by the Church [by sprinkling.] But *βαπτίζειν*

signifies *tingere, to dye*, or *stain*, seeing it comes immediately from *βάπτειν*; and, since *tingenda*, the things to be *dyed* or *stained*, are [commonly] dipped, it signifies to *make wet* and to *dip*. *Βαπτίσονται*, Vulg. *baptizentur*, which Erasmus hath deservedly changed for *loti fuerint*, since here it is not treated concerning that solemn ablution, to which, as before mentioned, the term *baptismus*, baptism, has been long *appropriated* and consecrated by the usage of all Churches."—*Tract. Theolog.*, vol. i., p. 28; vol. iii., p. 195; *Annot. in Matt.* iii. 11, *et Mark* vii. 4.

(9.) Tilenus:—"Although immersion might have been formerly more customary than aspersion, especially in Judea and other warm countries, yet since the *circumstance* of immersion does not belong to the *substance* of baptism, the analogy of the sacrament may be retained, *no less* by sprinkling than by dipping. Here, in an especial manner, are exhibited to us the remission of sins by the blood of Christ, and sanctification by His Spirit. Baptism, if we regard the etymology of the word, signifies immersion, and also aspersion, in which sense it is used, Mark vii. 4; and, by consequence, washing. Baptism in general signifies either immersion, or ablution, or perfusion."—*De Bapt.*, disp. i., thes. ii. xv.; *Syntag. de Bapt.*, i., thes. x.; *Theol. Syst.*, p. 1077.

(10.) Pasor:—"*Βάπτω* is derived from *βάω*, for which is used *βαίνω*, from the Hebrew *ba*, [signifying *motion*, going or coming] —*βαπτομαι*, to *dip*, *imbue*, *infect;* Rev. xix. 3, a garment *tinged* or stained with blood. *βάφησομαι*, *tingar*, Lev. xi. 32, *βαφησεται εἰς ὕδωρ*. Hieron.: *tingetur aqua*, shall be *cleansed*, or purified, by water.* *βαπτίζω*, to *immerse*, to *wash*, to *baptize:* Matt. iii. 11, *Βαπτίζω ὑμᾶς ἐν ὕδατι*, *Baptizo vos aqua*,—I baptize you *with* water; *ἐν*, being an Hebraism, is here redundant."—*Lexic.* Lond., 1644.

(11.) Casaubon:—"Immersion is not *necessary* to baptism, since the force and efficacy of this mystery does not consist therein. It was not without some ground of plea that some have long ago insisted on immersing the whole body in the ceremony of baptism; urging the word *βαπτίζειν*. But their opinion has been *deservedly* long since exploded; for the force and energy of this mystery consist not in that circumstance."—*In Matt.* iii. 6.

(12.) Cradock:—"In baptism there are two parts—1. The out-

* "See also Dr Pococke, who was not behind the chief of the Rabbis in Hebrew literature; Not. Miscell., cap. ix., p. 388."

ward; 2. The inward. In the *outward* part there are three things considerable: the outward element, *water;* the *action* of applying the water, by SPRINKLING OR DIPPING; the *form* of administering or applying the water, viz., *in the name,* &c. Sprinkling is as significant, as to the main ends of baptism, as dipping; therefore the blood of Christ, which is signified by baptism, is called the blood of sprinkling, (Heb. xii. 24, 1 Pet. i. 2.) And sprinkling comes nearer the baptism mentioned in the Old Testament than dipping doth, (1 Cor. x. 2.) Surely the children of Israel were not *dipped* in the *cloud,* but only *sprinkled* with it, that is, with some drops that fell from it; nor *dipped* in the Red Sea, but only *touched* it with their feet, or else possibly some *drops* from the waves of it might be blown by the wind. Besides, [supposing the apostolic mode were immersion,] we do not find that our Saviour and the apostles [any more than the Jews] continued *every circumstance that was in use* in the first institution of the sacrament of the *passover;* therefore, some circumstances may be varied according to *Christian prudence,* provided we keep close to *the main* of the institution, and the *ends* of it. To conclude this particular: *baptizing* is ANY KIND OF RELIGIOUS WASHING or SPRINKLING, in the name, &c., duly performed by a person rightly qualified for it. The *inward* part of baptism, or the spiritual mysteries therein signified, are these two: the *blood of Christ sprinkled* upon the soul for the washing away the guilt of sin; the *grace of Christ poured* into the soul, purging out the power and dominion of sin by regeneration and sanctification."—*Knowl. and Pract.,* Supplem., p. 111.

§ 25 (13.) Usher:—"The word *baptism* in general signifieth *any washing.* What is the second sacramental action? The action of *washing;* that is, of *applying* the sacramental water unto the party to be baptized, diving or dipping him into it, or sprinkling him with it, *in the name,* &c. Neither dipping is *essential* to the sacrament of baptism, or sprinkling, but only washing and applying water to the body, as a cleanser of the filth thereof."—*Body of Div.,* pp. 411–413.

(14.) Winderlinus:—"Baptism is the first sacrament of the New Testament, wherein they who are in the covenant of God are *sprinkled* and [thereby, in the religious or ceremonial sense of the word] *washed.* The matter of which baptism consists is—1. *Water;*

2. *Immersion* or *aspersion.*"—*Christ. Theol.*, lib. i., cap. xxii., thes. iv., pp. 358, 363.

(15.) Walæus and Michælis a Gogh :—"*Βάπτω* and *βαπτίζω*, from whence comes *βαπτισμὸς*, signify, properly, to *tinge* and to *wash.* The ritual or ceremonial sign in this sacrament is a baptization or *washing* 'in the name of the Father,' &c., as Christ has expressly commanded, (Matt. xxviii. and Mark xvi.) But there is *no express command* left us whether we should use immersion or aspersion, and *examples* of aspersion *no less* than immersion may be discovered in the Scriptures."—*Synops. Purior. Theol.*, disput. xliv., thes. iii. xviii.

(16.) Chemnitz :—"Paul, that infallible interpreter, says, that to *baptize* is to *cleanse* or purify *by the washing* of water through the word, (Eph. v., Tit. iii., Acts ii.) Whether the application of the water be made by *dipping, tinging, pouring,* or *sprinkling,* it is a BAPTIZATION ; for it is a cleansing or ablution by the washing of water : and *immersion* under water is not necessarily required to *washing.* The command of Christ therefore is, that there should be in baptism an ablution *by the washing of water ;* but by what *mode* that should be done, whether by dipping, tinging, perfusion, or aspersion, *Christ hath not prescribed.*"—*Exam. Concil. Trident.*, p. ii., p. 122.

(17.) Liturgia Tigurina :—"The godmother goeth near the minister, and holdeth the child over the font, and the minister POURETH three handfuls of water upon the child's forehead, saying, 'N. N., I BAPTIZE thee, in the name of God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Amen.'"—*The Form of Com. Prayers practised in all the Churches of the City and Canton of Zurich in Switzerland ; and in some other adjacent countries,* p. 89. Lond., 1693.

(18.) English Rubric :—"Then the priest shall take the child into his hands, and shall say to the godfathers and godmothers, 'Name this child.' And then naming it after them, (if they shall certify him that the child may well endure it,) he shall *dip* it in the water discreetly and warily, saying, 'N., I baptize thee in the name,' &c. But if they certify that the child is weak, it shall suffice to *pour water upon* it, saying the foresaid words, 'N., I baptize thee,'" &c.—*The Book of Com. Prayer.*

(19.) Markius :—"*Baptism* originally denotes *washing,* (Mark vii. 3, 4,) as it is also otherwise called the *washing of water,* and

of *regeneration*, (Eph. v. 26; Tit. iii. 5.) The Christian baptism of water is defined—the first sacrament of the New Testament, in which, by the *ablution of the body*, by means of immersion, infusion, or aspersion of water, performed by a minister of the gospel, the spiritual ablution [or, *washing*] from the stain and guilt of sin by the Spirit and blood of Christ, is signified and sealed, &c.—The *action* to be performed by water is *ablution;* whether by the immersion of the whole body, or by sprinkling or pouring: since the word *baptize* is a *general* term denoting *a washing;* and *thus* [by the modes last mentioned] the apostles also seem to have sometimes baptized, (Acts ii. 41, x. 48, xvi. 33.)"—*Christ. Theol. Medulla*, cap. xxx., § 9.

(20.) Pictetus:—"The word *baptism* is derived from *βάπτειν*, which is to *tinge*, and to *imbue;* and because the Hebrew word *tabal*, which the LXX. render by *βαπτίζειν*, (2 Kings v. 14,) is used for *rachatz*, which signifies to *wash*, hence *βαπτίζειν* is taken for simply *to wash*, (Mark vii. 4,) and from thence *diverse washings* are mentioned by Paul, (Heb. ix. 10.) The word *βαπτισμὸς* does not less denote sprinkling than immersion. The Muscovites err, who teach that immersion is of the essence of baptism; and those Greeks, who, in the Council of Florence, called the Latins *unbaptized*, were delirious."—*Theol. Christ.*, lib. xiv., cap. iv., § 6, 17.

§ 26. (21.) Cornelius [Bishop of Rome, about A.D. 254]:—"Novatian, having fallen into a dangerous disorder, and as was thought very like to die, was baptized in the bed where he lay *by perfusion* (*περιχυθεις*)—if it may be called a baptism which he received, since he did not obtain after his recovery what was necessary *according to the canon* of the Church—viz., confirmation by the bishop's hands."—*Epist. ad Fabium Antioch., ap. Euseb.*, lib. vi., cap. xliii.

(22.) Cyprian:—"In baptism (*sacramento salutari*) the contagious spots of sin are not washed away as the filth of the skin and body in a carnal and secular bath; as if there were need of *wash-balls*, a *bathing-vessel*, or a *capacious pool*, and any other conveniences, whereby the body is washed and cleansed. In a *different* manner is the heart of a believer washed; the human *mind*, by the merits of Christ, is *otherwise* purified. In the sacraments of salvation, when necessity urges, and through the indulgence of God, the Divine abridgements [*Divina compendia, i.e.*,

such *ablutions* as did not remove the filth of the flesh, yet were *divinely*-instituted symbols of complete purification] convey the whole benefit to the faithful. Nor let any one think it strange that the sick, when they are *baptized*, are only *sprinkled* or *perfused*, since the Holy Scripture says by the prophet Ezekiel, (chap. xxxvi. 25, 26,) 'I will *sprinkle clean water* upon you, and ye shall be *clean;* from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I *cleanse* you. A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you.' It is also said in Numbers, (chap. xix. 19, 20,) &c. 'And again the Lord spake to Moses, [Num. viii. 6, 7,] Take the Levites from among the children of Israel, and *cleanse* them. And thus shalt thou do unto them, to *cleanse* them; *Sprinkle* water of purifying upon them.' And, again, the water of *aspersion* is *purification*. From whence it appears, that sprinkling is sufficient instead of immersion. Or if any one shall think that they are not at all benefited who are only *besprinkled* with the water of salvation, let them not be imposed upon; and if they recover, let them be *baptized!* But if they *cannot* be baptized, as having been *already* sanctified with the ecclesiastical *baptism*, why are they distressed with scruples?"—Epist. lxix., pp. 186, 187. Ed. Oxon., 1682.

(23.) Origen:—"Whence had you [Pharisees] the persuasion that Elias, when he should come, would baptize, who did not, in Ahab's time, *baptize the wood* upon the altar, which required a washing, in order that, on the Lord's appearing by fire, it might be burned; for he gave orders to the priests to perform that? He, therefore, who did not himself then *baptize*, but assigned *that work* to others, [1 Kings xviii. 33, 'Fill four barrels of water, and POUR IT ON the burnt sacrifice, and on *the wood*,'] how was it likely that he, who was to come according to Malachi's prediction, should *baptize?*"—*Comment. in Joan., Oper.*, tom. vii., p. 116. Ed. 1668.

(24.) Frider. Spanhemius F.:—"The form of baptism in use (cent. ii.) was immersion, or (*καταδυσις*) the *plunging* of the naked body in water, whether men, or women, or infants; and indeed *thrice*, in reference to the holy Trinity—a custom still in use among the Orientals. Due regard was had for female modesty in baptism by the appointed deaconesses. And the very putting off their clothes, and nakedness, had with them a moral signification. Nevertheless, the infirm, or such as were confined to their

beds, were sprinkled there; which baptism was termed περιχυσις, *perfusion*. And this, it should seem, was used in the Church of Jerusalem, when the multitude of the persons to be baptized amounted to *three thousand*, and presently after to *five thousand*, (Acts ii., iv.,) for *there* was no river to put them in."—*Histor. Christ.*, Secul. II., sect. iv.; *De Bapt., Oper.*, p. 622. Ed. Lugd., 1701.

§ 27. (25.) Mr John Wesley:—"The *matter* of this sacrament is water; which, as it has a natural power of cleansing, is the more fit for this symbolical use. Baptism is performed by washing, dipping, or sprinkling, the person, in the name, &c. I say, by *washing, dipping,* OR *sprinkling,* because it is *not determined* in Scripture in which of these ways it shall be done; neither by any express *precept,* nor by any such *example* as clearly proves it, nor by the force and meaning of the word *baptize.* That there is no express *precept,* all calm men allow; neither is there any conclusive *example.* John's baptism in some things agreed with Christ's, in others differed from it. But it cannot be certainly proved from Scripture that even John's was performed by dipping. Nor can it be proved that the baptism of our Saviour, or that administered by His disciples, was by immersion; no, nor that of the eunuch baptized by Philip, though they both 'went down into the water,' for that *going down* may relate to the chariot, and implies no determinate depth of water: it might be up to their knees, or not be above their ankles. And as nothing can be determined from Scripture precept or example, so neither from the force or meaning of the word; for the words *baptize* and *baptism* do not necessarily imply dipping, but are used in other senses in several places. That washing or cleansing is the true meaning of the word *baptize* is testified by the greatest scholars and most proper judges in this matter."—*Works,* vol. xix., p. 275.

(26.) J. Forbesius:—"With respect to the sacrament of baptism, by whatever mode it be administered, both the ancient fathers and those who succeeded them agreed that it is not necessary there should be a real ablution of the *filth of the flesh;* but what is commonly called *a washing,* by the contact or application of water to the body by another, who is a qualified minister; and that by this application, lawfully made, is represented the spiritual contact or application of the blood of Christ to the baptized subject: by which spiritual contact or application a person is truly washed and

cleansed from his sins. Hence that saying of Augustine—'Whence has water such virtue that it should *touch* the body and *wash* the heart?'—*Tract.* lxxx., *in Evang. Johan.* 'Nor is it necessary,' says Scotus, 'that there should be an *ablution*,—as that is contra-distinguished from *washing*, and includes the removal of filth from the body by the contaction of water,—but *a washing* of the body, so called in *general*, by water acting upon it to another purpose, is sufficient; which implies nothing else but that it is necessary a contaction of the body by means of water should be effected by another causing that contact.'—*Scot. in* iv. *Sent.*, dist. iii., q. 3. But *universal antiquity* hath given its suffrage, that this contact may be done either by immersion or *by sprinkling*. But the dipping even of infants was *more usual* down to the times of Gregory and Isidore."—*Instruct. Hist. Theol.*, lib. x., cap. ix., § 57, p. 504. Gen. 1680.

(27.) Dr Featly:—"*Βαπτίζω* is put generally for *washing*, (Luke xi. 38; Heb. ix. 10; Mark vii. 4;) *βαπτίζωνται*, they *baptized* themselves. Christ nowhere requireth *dipping*, but only *baptizing;* which word (as Hesychius, Scapula, and Budeus, the great masters of the Greek tongue, make good by very many instances and allegations out of classic writers) importeth no more than *ablution* or *washing*. *Βαπτίζω*, (say they in their lexicons and commentaries,) *lavo; βάπτισμα, lavatio, ablutio,* which may be done without dipping."—*In Leigh's Crit. Sacra.*

(28.) Peter Martyr:—"But this *purification*, whether we are dipped, or perfused, or sprinkled, or by *whatever mode* we are washed with water, is very appositely represented in baptism."—*In* 1 *Cor.* x.

(29.) Zanchius:—"*Baptism* is the *washing of water* by the word, in the name of the Father, &c.; for thus the apostle speaks when he calls it 'the washing of water by the word:' saying, that the Church is sanctified by Christ, and *purified*, or cleansed, with the washing of water by the word, (Eph. v. 26.) The *matter* is water; the *form* is the word; and the word added to the element makes the sacrament. Wherefore the apostle joins both, the water and the word. Nor does he say simply with water, but with *the washing of water*, teaching us that the mere water is not the sacrament of baptism, but the administration of water; that is, that sacred action whereby the body is washed with external water. In *what manner* baptism is to be administered, whether the persons should

be *dipped in water*, or only their heads *sprinkled with water*, Christ hath nowhere determined. This word signifies as well to *tinge*, and simply to *wash*, as to dip. In Acts ii., since we read of three thousand being baptized by Peter, it seems probable that their *heads were sprinkled with a little water*. The apostles, as far as we can collect from their writings, had no certain (*vasa*) vessels or receptacles instituted and determined for that purpose, but the churches had *free permission* to baptize by what method they chose. Nevertheless, *afterwards*, there were in the church vessels appointed, made in the form of a tomb, in which infants were immersed, and hence they were called *baptisteries*. And although baptism be received by those of the Church of Rome, it ought not to be *repeated;* because it is administered with the *true element*, and in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit."—*Oper.*, tom. iv., cap. xvi., *De Cultu Dei Exter. Artic. De Bapt.*, pp. 440, 486, 493, tom. vii., *Miscel.*, p. 86.

(30.) Paræus:—"Baptism among the Greeks is any kind of washing or ablution, whether it be by immersion or aspersion."—*In Heb.* ix. 10.

(31.) Musculus:—"As to the immersion of the infant to be baptized, we judge that this is not so necessary as that the churches were not free to baptize either by dipping or sprinkling. That this liberty was preserved in the churches we may see in Augustine, (De Eccles. Dogmat., cap. lxxiv.) 'The person to be baptized,' saith Augustine, 'is either *sprinkled* with water, or *dipped* in it.' And Cyprian (lib. iv., epist. vii., ad Magnum) defends the use of sprinkling in baptism."—*Loci Comm. de Bapt.*

§ 28. (32.) Ursinus:—"The word *baptism* signifieth a dipping in water, or sprinkling with water. Those of the *East* Church were dipped, their whole body, in the water; those of the *North*, in colder countries, are only sprinkled with water. This *circumstance* is of no moment or weight, for washing may be either by dipping or sprinkling; and baptism is a *washing*. The catechism definition is, 'Baptism is an outward washing with water, commanded by Christ,'" &c.—*Sum of Christ. Relig.*, Translated by Parrie, part ii., q. 69, p. 695.

(33.) Dr Watts:—"The Greek word *baptizo* signifies to *wash* anything, properly by water coming over it. Now there are several ways of such washing—viz., sprinkling water on it in small quantity, pouring water on it in larger quantity, or dipping it under

water either in part or in whole. And since this seems to be left *undetermined in Scripture to one particular mode*, therefore any of these ways of washing may be sufficient to answer the purpose of this ordinance. Now that the Greek word signifies *washing* a thing *in general* by water coming over it, and not always dipping, is argued by learned men, not only from ancient *Greek* authors, but from the New Testament itself," &c.—*Berry-street Sermons*, ser. xxxvii., vol. ii., p. 156. Ed. 1757. Also his *Works*, vol. i., p. 820.

(34.) Lactantius:—"When Jesus was grown up, He was baptized (*tinctus est*) by the prophet John in the river Jordan; not that He might wash away His own sins by the spiritual laver, for He had none, but for an external purification: that as He had saved the Jews by circumcision, so also He might save the Gentiles by *baptism*, that is, (*purifici roris perfusione*,) by the *perfusion* of the purifying water."—*Divin. Instit.*, lib. iv., § 15, pp. 354, 365. Ed. Oxon., 1684.

(35.) Perkins:—"Baptism is a sacrament, by which such as are within the covenant are *washed with water* in the name of the Father, &c.: Matt. xxviii. 19, 'Go, teach all nations, *baptizing* them.' Touching the *name*, it is taken *six* ways:—[1.] It signifies the superstitious washings of the Pharisees, who bound themselves to the *baptisms* or *washings* of cups and pots, (Mark vii. 4.) [2.] It signifies the *washings* appointed by God in the ceremonial law, (Heb. ix. 10.) [3.] It signifies that *washing by water* which serves to seal the covenant of the New Testament, (Matt. xxviii. 19.) [4.]. It signifies by a metaphor any grievous cross or calamity. Thus the *passion* of Christ is called His *baptism*, (Luke xii. 50.) [5.] It signifies the *bestowing* of extraordinary gifts of the Holy Ghost, and that by imposition of hands of the apostles, (Acts i. 5, xi. 16.) [6.] It signifies the whole ecclesiastical *ministry*, (Acts xviii. 25.) And it must be remembered that *baptizing* signifies not *only* that washing which is by diving of the body, but *also* that which is by *sprinkling*. Many of our ancestors heretofore have been *baptized* by mass-priests, and never received any baptism but in the Church of Rome. Now the demand is, whether that baptism were sufficient or no; and, whether they must be *re-baptized*. I answer thus: The Romish priest is no minister of God and Christ, but of Antichrist, in that he offers Christ a real sacrifice for the quick and the dead, wherein chiefly stands his

office; yet because he hath been and is designed by men to baptize, and stands in the room of a lawful minister, *his action* IS NOT VOID. For though he be not a minister lawfully called to baptize, yet he is not a mere private man; but he is between both,—that is; one called, though amiss, through ignorance and oversight of men, —and consequently stands in the room of a right and lawful minister. In things done there be two kinds of faults: one in the work, another in the worker. A fault in the *work* is when the action itself is done amiss; and it may be done amiss in *substance* or in *circumstance;* and if the fault be in the *substance* thereof, it is indeed a nullity, and must be reputed as not done. The fault of the *worker* is, when an action of a lawful calling is done by one that is not called lawfully. Now then, when the fault of an action is not done in the work itself, but in the person that worketh it, it is not to be reputed a nullity, neither to be reversed as nothing. As for example, one called lawfully to the ministry baptizeth infants in the name of the Father and the Virgin Mary: here is a fault in the *action* done, and that in the *substance* of baptism, and therefore here is no baptism, but rather a profanation of the ordinance of God. Now put the case further, that baptism is administered by a man that is called, though not lawfully: I say if there be no [essential] fault in the action, but only in the man, that baptism is not to be reputed a nullity. Whosoever denieth this ground of truth overturns the regiment of kingdoms, churches, states, and societies whatsoever."—*Works*, vol. i., pp. 73, 765; vol. ii., p. 256.

N.B.—This eminent Protestant divine, who seldom spared any *pillar* or *part of Popery* when it stood in his way, was clearly of opinion (and the judgment of so learned a polemic, and so venerable a casuist, claims at least a tribute of respect) that neither the *unworthiness* of the administrator, nor the specific *mode* of using the element, could justify a sound Protestant in rejecting the Popish baptism as a nullity; while he takes into account for this purpose, the force of the term *baptism*, the nature and design of the institution, the analogy of faith, and the principles of right reason.

(36.) Wilson:—"*Baptism—dipping* into water, or *washing with* water: 1 Pet. iii. 21, 'Whereof baptism,' &c. *Pouring* out, or *shedding* abroad, the gifts of the Spirit: Acts xi. 16, 'Ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost,' (Matt. iii. 11, Acts i. 5.) To

baptize with the Spirit, is to *bestow* the graces of the Spirit. To *baptize:* to *dip* into water—to *sprinkle* or *wash* one's body sacramentally. Thus the minister baptizeth. Matt. iii. 11, 'I baptize you with water,' that is, outward sacramental washing. The minister baptizeth by sprinkling with water; God baptizeth by bestowing the gifts of His Spirit."—*Christ. Dict.*

(37.) Synod of Dort:—"We believe and confess that Jesus Christ, having abolished circumcision, hath instituted the sacrament of baptism in the room of it; whereby we are received into the Church of God, and are separated from all other nations, and from all other foreign or false religions; that we may be consecrated or devoted to Him alone, whose character and mark we bear. And hereby we have a testimony, that He will always be our God and propitious Father. Wherefore He hath commanded that all who are His should be baptized, to wit, with pure water, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit; to signify, that as water (*in nos effusa*) *poured upon us,* and to be seen on the body of the baptized, and sprinkling it, washes the filth off the body; so also the blood of Christ performs the same internally in the soul by the Holy Spirit, sprinkling it, and cleansing it from its sins, and regenerating us from children of wrath, to be children of God. We believe that we ought to be baptized but once, with that one baptism, which is not to be repeated in future, since we cannot be born twice. Nor is this baptism serviceable only when water is *poured upon* us and received by us, since the use of it extends itself to the whole course of our life. Wherefore we detest the error of the Anabaptists; who are not content with *one baptism* once received, and who, moreover, condemn the baptism of infants born of Christian parents."—*Corp. Confess.: Acta Synodi Dordrecht,* § xxxiv., p. 143.

(38.) Confessio et Expositio Fidei Christianæ:—"Baptism was instituted and consecrated by God; and John first baptized 'qui Christum aquà in Jordane tinxit,' who tinged, *i.e.,* baptized, Christ *with water* in Jordan. From Him it descended to the apostles, who also themselves baptized *with water.* The Lord manifestly commanded them to preach the gospel, and to baptize in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. And Peter, in answer to the Jews, inquiring what they ought to do, said, in the Acts, 'Let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of

the Holy Ghost. Wherefore baptism is called by some, the initial sign of God's people, inasmuch as by this they were initiated to God, as His chosen. There is only one baptism in the Church of God, and it is enough to be once baptized, or initiated to God. But baptism once received, continues all our lifetime, and is a perpetual *seal* of our adoption. We are internally regenerated, purified, and renovated by God through the Holy Spirit; but externally we receive the *seal* of these very great blessings in the water, by which those very benefits are represented, and as it were exhibited before our eyes. Wherefore we are baptized, that is, *washed* or *sprinkled* with visible water.* Moreover, God separates us, by the symbol of baptism, from all strange religions and people, and consecrates us to Himself, as His peculiar possession."—*Corp. Confess.*, p. 46. *N.B.*—"Subscripserunt omnes omnium ecclesiarum Christi in Helvetia ministri, qui sunt Tiguri, Bernæ, Glaronæ, Basileæ, Scaphusii, Abbatiscellæ, Sangalli, Curiæ Rhetorum, et apud confœderatos, in ecclesiis Evangelium profitentibus cis et ultra Alpes, Milhusii item et Biennæ, quibus adjunxerunt se et ministri ecclesiæ, quæ est Genevæ, et Neocomi," &c.—*Pref.*

(39.) Pococke:—"In the first place, the word *baptism* does not necessarily denote an immersion of the whole body in water, even when used to express (*tebilah*) the more solemn degree of washing; since it is spoken of him who only intinges even his hand, according to the frequent use of Jewish tradition and discipline. Secondly, The same word is sometimes used for that slighter degree of washing which is performed by the *affusion* of water, and it *indifferently belongs to both;* which perhaps it may be useful to observe against those who morosely and over-scrupulously urge the force of the word, when disputing about the sacrament of baptism."—*Not. Miscell. in Port. Mosis.*, cap. ix.

(40.) Leigh:—"*Βαπτίζω, baptizo.* Mr Laurence, in his Treatise of Baptism, the fifth part, saith, 'The word *βαπτίζω* signifies properly *mergo, immergo*, that is, *to drown* (!) or *sink* in the water, to *dip*, to *overwhelm*, to *plunge;* so Chamier says, that immersion expresseth the force *του βαπτίζειν*: it signifies also *tingo*, to *dye* or *colour, quod fit immergendo; which is to be done* by dipping into the colour, overwhelming and drowning in it.† So

* "Ideoque baptizamur, id est, abluimur, aut aspergimur aqua visibili."

† *Which is to be done;* that is, if anything to the purpose, nothing *can be* tinged or coloured without immersing it. Something like Dr Gill, when he asserts,

Walæus, a learned professor of these parts, says, that the ancient Latins expressed the word *βαπτίζειν per tinctionem et inundationem; inundatio* is overflowing. This, therefore, is the material force of the word.' So he." To which Mr Leigh replies:—"I can find nothing at all in Chamier favouring your opinion of immersion. Walæus (*De Baptismo*) saith, '*Βάπτω* and *βαπτίζω* properly signifies *lavare* or *intingere;* as Mark vii. 4, and Luke xi. 38. It is indicated that it is *indifferent* whether we baptize by sprinkling or immersion, because examples of *both* are found in Scripture.' I suppose that which I have quoted in my *Critica* out of the best lexicographers, and that I here quote in the *margent* out of two learned doctors, [Pococke and Lightfoot,] may suffice to take off what is objected by Mr Laurence from the force of the word. Schmidius, on Matt. iii. 6, saith, *βαπτεῖν* is *to tinge;* from whence *βαπτίζω*. Any one, therefore, saith he, may baptize although he should not immerse in water, but should only *tinge with water*, by whatever convenient mode."—*Crit. Sacr.*, Supplem. Ed. 1662.

§ 29. It would be easy to collect a large volume of passages to the same import, from lexicographers, critics, and commentators; many of which I purposely omit, from the sole motive of not swelling the present work and being tedious to the reader. Now I venture to appeal to the peruser of the foregoing pages, whether the verdict of many very eminent literary characters does not corroborate the doctrine contained in our general thesis—viz., That *baptize* and *baptism*, at least when sacramentally used, or in their New Testament *legislative* meaning and force, are *generic terms?* "It will be allowed, I think, by every competent and impartial judge, that many of the authors from whose writings these quotations are made may be justly numbered among the first literary characters that any age has produced, and, therefore, as likely to know the true meaning of a Greek term as any of our late opposers;" and they are unanimously of opinion that the term *baptism* agrees to *different specific modes*, such as immersion and sprinkling: consequently, cannot be immersion *exclusively*, but is of course a *general* term.

"There is but *one way* of washing; and that is by dipping!" No, reader, you cannot wash your *face* but you must *dip* it! Messrs Laurence and Gill might have as well insisted that the *only way* to cut off a man's hair from his head is to sever the head from the body; or, that there is *no other way* to kill a man than by the specific mode of *stabbing!*

"Can it be supposed," says Mr B., "without impeaching the wisdom or goodness of Christ, that He enacted a law relating to His own worship, the *principal* term in which is *obscure* and *ambiguous*? Can it be imagined that He *intended* an ambiguity so great in the term baptism, which prescribes the duty to be performed, as to warrant the use of *immersion*, or of *pouring*, or of *sprinkling*, which are three different actions?" Why not? What inconvenience follows? If a sovereign enact that all his loving subjects should *resort* to some place of worship every Lord's-day, would he be blamable for not specifying the *mode* of resorting, or would his subjects have any just ground of complaint for not determining whether all were bound to the same *manner* of performing the general mandate? Nay, is it not evident that the greater the latitude of signification, the less danger there is of mistake, and, in reality, the less room for cavil? If the *generic* idea of a word be determinate, there is little reason to complain of the variety of specific ones contained under it. What could we think of a soldier who should quarrel with his officer because when he gave a general order to *kill*,* to *slay*, or to *put to death* the common enemy without quarter and without exception, he had not, withal, specified whether he must do it by cutting off the head, by stabbing, or by any other *one method* exclusively? When God said, "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed," (Gen. ix. 6,) is there any just ground of reflection on the conduct of the Divine Legislator that the *manner*, or specific mode, of executing the sentence was not precisely determined? Would it become any of our Lord's professed followers to indulge the irreverent humour of cavilling, and charging His legislative authority with imperfection, because He has not precisely determined the quantity and quality of the bread and wine in His Supper: whether the washing of the disciples' feet, anointing the sick with oil, the observance of the seventh day as a Sabbath, and the feasts of charity, are, or are not, of perpetual obligation? If a master orders his servant to go to a certain place on his business, leaving it as a matter quite indifferent, because unimportant, by *what road*

* "*Killing* a man with a sword or a hatchet are looked on as *no species* of action; but if the point of the sword first enter the body, it passes for a distinct species where it has a distinct name; as in England, in whose language it is called *stabbing*; but in another country, where it has not happened to be specified under a particular name, it passes not for a distinct species."—*Locke's Essay on Hum. Under.*, book II., chap. vi., § 11.

out of several the journey may be performed, and the business done; would it not betray the want of good sense, as well as a rebellious cavil, for the servant to charge the master with "either weakness or wickedness," because he had not positively and absolutely specified which of these different roads must be taken, to the *exclusion* of all others? In short, to find fault *à priori*, as Mr B. does, with the idea that our Lord should enact a law by a term of *latitude*, is to find fault with Divine wisdom for granting to man any degree of *liberty* of choice in his actions. Why should any *wish* a restriction of that principle, the exercise of which is the distinguishing privilege of our nature, when, on the supposition, no advantage to man or glory to God can ensue therefrom? Why covet fetters every way unprofitable? Why *desire* such an *act of uniformity* in the case of baptism, to the exclusion of every degree of liberty, while the ground and existence of all positive institutions depend on the good pleasure of the institutor, and on that alone?

§ 30. (FOURTH,) The truth of what I contend for will further appear from the *concessions* of Antipædobaptists.

Concessions may be made by *actions* as well as by words. And when any who professedly renounce the practice of infant baptism admit persons to the highest degree of Christian communion, when baptized only by sprinkling, while themselves, notwithstanding, practise immersion, does it not amount to a *concession* that baptizing by *affusion* or *sprinkling* is equally valid with their own? And does it not amount to a concession that the baptizing of *infants* is not a nullity? If it be said, that Antipædobaptist congregations allow free communion to Pædobaptists *as unbaptized*, we ask what evidence is there for such an assertion? The practice of adult baptism in the same congregation only shews that some from conscientious scruples *prefer* adult immersion, as in their apprehension more scriptural and solemn. Which is the most charitable construction of their conduct in this matter, to say, that they judge infant baptism to be *valid*, and therefore admit their Pædobaptist brethren to full communion; or else, that they admit those whom they deem *unbaptized?* Mr B. adopts the latter, however destitute it may seem both of evidence and of brotherly candour:—"Though I look upon the *former* [Pædobaptist brethren] as under a mistake, in regard to baptism, I consider them as acting, not only conscientiously but consistently with their own principles in respect of that ordinance; while I

view the conduct of the *latter* [professed Baptists, who admit Pædobaptists to their churches and communion] not only as contrary to the order of primitive Christian churches, but as *inconsistent with their own avowed sentiments.*"* It is pretty manifest from this passage, and many others in the same performance, that Mr B. takes it for granted those Baptists he opposes *maintain* the nullity of infant baptism. But the *fact* of mixed communion implies no such thing. It, therefore, follows that nothing short of explicit declarations of their receiving their brethren as *unbaptized*, or as regarding their baptism as a *mere nullity*, can justify Mr B.'s charge of inconsistency. All that can be fairly gathered from their conduct in this case is, that they admit the *validity* of infant-sprinkling, though for their own part they give the *preference* to adult-plunging. They consider, I presume, the *points of difference* in the light of *circumstantials*, or *non-essentials*, of baptism, though in their own *private judgment* they apprehend immersion of adults *more conformable* to their Lord's pleasure.

Again; as far as we are authorised to form a judgment on the *conduct* of the free Baptists, they refer these *points of difference* about baptism to the *private judgment* of the subject. For when a communicant is dissatisfied with his infant baptism, the minister and the church admit him to the bath according to their own custom of baptizing, which otherwise they could not do without deserving the name of *Anabaptists*. But if he is *satisfied* without it, they liberally acknowledge that they have no right to *impose* those *circumstances* of baptism which Christ has left free. And that those Baptist ministers and churches who practise free communion, and who are considerably numerous, as they are also, on account of their learning and piety, not less respectable than their brethren, do regard *baptism*, though not *immersion*, as an essential prerequisite for Christian communion, appears hence: if any are proposed to strict fellowship, who, according to their own judgment and profession, were *never baptized*,—as are the children born of Antipædobaptist parents,—they are never admitted, if I mistake not, without previous baptism. I do not pretend so say that every part of their conduct in these matters is right; but it is sufficient for me to infer thence, what appears fairly *inferable*, that their *actions* and habitual conduct *concede* my principle.

§ 31. It is also fact, that some Antipædobaptists reject immer-

* Mr Booth's Apology for the Baptists, p. 19.

sion, on conviction of the *preference* of aspersion or affusion, from a strict examination of Scripture evidence. Not to mention the Antipædobaptists of Holland, of whom it is said that they "*commonly use affusion*," I shall present the reader, not only with the *opinion*, but also the *reasoning* of an Antipædobaptist who has lately published on this subject:—"It seems to me that baptism was administered, both by John and the apostles of Christ, by *sprinkling* or *pouring*, and not by *immersion*. A river does not seem to have been chosen for the purpose of baptism as if no other place was *proper* for it. The three thousand baptized, and added to the Church the same day, (see Acts ii.,) seem rather, in my opinion, to have been baptized in houses. Saul of Tarsus, 'in the house of Judas,' (Acts ix.;) likewise the jailer and his family were, I conceive, baptized at home, (Acts xvi.) Cornelius also, and his believing friends, were probably baptized in the centurion's own house, (Acts x.;) and the words of Peter on that occasion, 'Can any one forbid water?' seem to imply that water was to be brought to them, and not that the persons to be baptized were led out to some other place for the conveniency of immersion, as *no hint of that kind is there given us.* Persons may very properly be said to go down *into* a water or river, and come up *out of it*, without going in to such a *depth* as is necessary for the purpose of *immersion;* nor do I remember it is anywhere said that the person baptized was *covered with water*, or *put under it;* and, had this been the case, I can hardly think the Scripture would have been entirely silent about it, but in some place or other it would have been expressly mentioned, especially if it be a circumstance of such *importance* as some persons suppose and contend for. Nor does the Scripture, anywhere that I can find, represent the mode of baptism as a resemblance of the burial and resurrection of Christ. I am sure the words of Paul, Rom. vi. 3, 4, Col. ii. 12, do not *expressly* declare it. Neither does the passage, John iii. 23, plainly tell us that John baptized in Ænon, because of the *depth* of water in that place, *for the sake of immersion;* so that the arguments raised from such passages as these to prove immersion the true mode of Scripture baptism, amount, in my opinion, to nothing more than *bare supposition*, without containing any certain *proof* of the point in question. The evangelist Matthew (chap. iii. 6) does not say they went in it *in order to be baptized by immersion;* this, therefore, amounts to no more than *mere con-*

jecture, or *bare assertion* of the learned Doctor [Gill.] We, on the other hand, may as reasonably suppose and affirm that they went into the water to be baptized by *sprinkling,* and not by immersion, for anything this text says to the contrary. Had John been sent only to give them to *drink* of the water of Jordan, it would have been more *convenient* for the people to come down to him unto the river for that purpose, though it might have been given them some other way: so likewise, if he baptized by *sprinkling* or *pouring,* it would have been highly inconvenient for him to have baptized them with the waters of Jordan but *at* or *in* the river itself. Had he baptized after the manner of the present advocates for immersion, it is scarce credible how John *alone,* in any reasonable time, could have baptized the vast numbers that resorted to him; but every difficulty is removed on the supposition of their coming to him *unto* or *into* the water, that he might, with the greater ease and convenience, *sprinkle* or *pour* water upon them. As the Doctor lays a stress on the words *out of,* I observe that Matt. iii. 16 may be literally translated thus: 'Jesus, when he was baptized, went immediately up *from* the water;'—which words are so far from being a *necessary proof* of His being baptized by immersion, that they do not *necessarily* declare that He was at all *in* the water; consequently, what the Doctor terms a 'necessary proof,' amounts to no more than *mere supposition;* and to me it seems highly probable that Christ was not *under* the water at all, for there is not the least hint of His *rising up,* or of John's raising Him *from a state of immersion,* which must necessarily have followed His being immersed, before He could be said to come out of it. But as the text says, immediately upon His being baptized, He went up *out of,* or (as the preposition may more properly be rendered) *from* the water, it seems to me that Christ only stood *in* or *at* the brink of Jordan when John baptized Him. And as His being baptized by John was *straightway followed* by that of the Holy Spirit, which descended from heaven upon Him, (which baptism of the Spirit being, as I conceive, that which was *eminently signified* by John's baptism with water,) it seems to me more congruous and reasonable to suppose that the *manner* of both was precisely the same—viz., that of *sprinkling* or *pouring.* I marvel that a man of Dr Gill's learning and discernment should lay so great a stress as he does on Mark's using the particle εἰς, which, it is well known, often signifies the same

as ἐν, *in;* and so Mark evidently uses them as synonymous in the passage referred to, (Mark i. 5, 8, 9.) And here I observe also, that it is as proper to say a person was *sprinkled with* water, as that he was *plunged into* water. But it is further manifest, from Acts viii. 38, that the particle εἰς is not intended to express a person's being *immersed* or *put under* water, for we there read that *they* went down (εἰς) *into* or *unto* the water, both Philip and the eunuch; yet surely Philip himself did not go *under* the water. But if it be true that such an expression as εἰς will not suit, as the Doctor says it will not, with any other mode but immersion, it must necessarily follow that both Philip and the eunuch were *immersed together;* and as it afterwards follows, 'he [Philip] baptized him,' the *eunuch,* according to the Doctor's reasoning, must have been *twice immersed.* Ἐν, likewise, in the case of baptism, not only *can,* but I think *ought* to be rendered *with* or *by;* for though it would be awkward to say John baptized *with* or *by* Jordan, yet, as Dr Gill rightly observes, [on his hypothesis,] he did not baptize into the *banks* of Jordan, but into the *waters* of Jordan; and there is no more impropriety in saying that John *sprinkled* them *with* or *by* the waters of Jordan, than in saying he *dipped* them *in* or *into* the waters of Jordan. Εἰς also, which is used indifferently with ἐν, may be rendered *by* in this case, as it is in Matt. v. 34, 35, where these particles are used together, as in the case of baptism: 'Neither shalt thou swear (ἐν) *by* heaven, nor (ἐν) *by* the earth, nor (εἰς) *by* Jerusalem.' . . . . It does not appear from this passage [John iii. 23] that the evangelist intended to represent the *mode* of baptism in any way or manner whatever, as the Doctor here supposes. As it is not said John was baptizing in Ænon because the water was *deep* in that place, or because there was much water *for the conveniency of immersion,* the Doctor's *inference,* [in favour of immersion,] in my opinion, is *mere hypothesis.* The holy waters which Ezekiel saw issuing from the sanctuary were not *little,* but *much;* yet when the angel had measured a thousand cubits from the place whence they issued, and caused the prophet to pass through them, they were only up to the *ankles.* We read also that John removed from place to place for the purpose of baptizing; and it seems to me probable, that one of his reasons for it was because in some places the water failed, and was dried up; and perhaps this was his reason for going to Ænon, because, as the Greek expresses it, there were *many waters,* or *divers streams,*

which were not so apt to fail him and become dry as in some other places. Upon the whole, that John baptized in Ænon by *immersion*, cannot be proved from *this place*, because the evangelist is *entirely silent about it*. Whatever, then, was the reason of John's going to Ænon to baptize, nothing can thence be inferred with certainty that John baptized by immersion; *there being not a word in all the passage* either about the *depth* of these waters or the *mode* of baptism . . . . The Doctor's gloss on this text [Rom. vi. 4] seems to me *unwarrantable* and *erroneous*. It is observable that the apostle through the whole passage *does not so much as once mention* our being baptized into Christ's *burial*, nor into His *resurrection;* but he says, again and again, baptized into His *death*. No *mode* of baptism, then, can with certainty be inferred from these words; for he mentions our having been *buried* and *raised* with Christ only as the effect, or in *consequence*, of our being dead with Christ by being baptized into His *death;* therefore, the apostle *only infers* that we are *buried* with Christ. How? by being *baptized* into His *burial?* No; but by being baptized into His *death*. And I humbly conceive the apostle would have said not His *death*, but *burial*, if he had intended to describe baptism as a resemblance of Christ's burial in the *mode* of it, but he seems to me carefully to avoid it. Thus I have endeavoured to shew that the New Testament does not *plainly declare* baptism to have been administered by immersion from any *circumstances* attending the administration of it; so that, for anything the Scripture saith to the contrary, it might have been administered by *sprinkling* or *pouring*.

§ 32. "The point in dispute *entirely hinges* on this, IN WHAT SENSE the SCRIPTURE uses this word; whether to *dip* a person *in* and *under water*, or to *wash* him *with water*. Is it not then impertinent for any one still to urge, in Homer, Plutarch, &c., it signifies to *dip* or *plunge;* for who denies it? The point in dispute hinges on this, has it *always* that sense, and *no other?* for else it proves nothing against us,—especially if this be not its *constant meaning throughout the* SCRIPTURE. Nor indeed is its idea of *dipping* sufficient to justify the Baptists in their practice; for if they are in the right, it must signify not *barely* to *dip*, but to *dip under* water.

"Mr Parkhurst, after having mentioned the word *baptizo* as signifying to dip or plunge, adds, 'But the *New Testament does*

not use it strictly in this sense, unless,' &c. And afterwards citing 1 Cor. x. 2, he says, '*baptized by sprinkling.*' Gouldman on the word *baptizo,* says, 'To *wash,* to *water,* to *sprinkle,*' &c. Ainsworth on the word *lavo,* says, 'To *wash,* to *bathe,* to *besprinkle.*'

"But, further, the inspired writers of the Old and New Testaments do nowhere, in my opinion, intend by the word *baptizo* to express *merely,* or *chiefly,* an act of *immersion* or dipping, and much less to *dip under water,* but rather that of washing or sprinkling; and this I hope to make appear from the following considerations:—

"*First,* Because in several places they use the word *bapto* for the act of *dipping,* but they do not so much as once use this word to signify the ordinance of baptism, but always its derivative, *baptizo.* Now if they had meant by the word *baptizo* to signify a proper dipping, it is, I think, hard to conceive why the word *bapto* was *never* used by them to express that ordinance. I suppose, therefore, the sacred writers do not mean by the word *baptizo* a dipping of the body under water. The Baptists, indeed, tell us immersion, or dipping a person under water, is *essential* to baptism; but the Scripture, in my opinion, lays the whole stress on a person's being *washed,* and not at all on his being *dipped.* Some indeed affirm there is no washing but by dipping; but this I think is *rashly spoken,* for it is contradicted by every one's daily experience; for men may, and generally do, wash their *face* every day *without dipping* it. And though they dip their hands in water, in order to wash them, yet the face is as completely washed *without* dipping it as the hands are *by* dipping them.

"*Secondly,* The apostle, Heb. ix. 10, speaks of *divers* washings, (Greek, *different baptisms.*) His words are not 'divers *persons,* or *things* baptized,' but διαφόροις βαπτισμοῖς, *diverse baptisms.* They were not only *divers, many,* but they were also *diverse, different.* The Latin *diversus* is ambiguous, but διαφόρος not; for I find it nowhere used to signify *many,* but, as it properly means, to denote a *diversity* or *difference;* and thence an *excellency* of one person or thing above another. And whoever carefully attends, with a mind unbiassed, to the scope of the passage, Heb. ix., will, I think, be led to understand the apostle as speaking of *every sort of washing* FOR PURIFICATION under the law, (the chief of which was that of *sprinkling;*) for else, I conceive, to prevent his being misunderstood, he would have *specified* the

particular mode he intended by it. And as he does not so much as name that mode of washing sometimes rendered *bathing*, but he again and again mentions that mode, and *that only*, which was by *sprinkling*, I suppose the apostle, in the passage under consideration, eminently refers to that mode of baptism or washing which was by sprinkling; consequently, the *sprinklings* under the law were *baptisms*, and are here so termed by the apostle. Mr Jenkins, indeed, says, (as Dr Gill had done before him,) 'The sprinkling [mentioned Num. xix.] only *sanctified* or *separated* FOR the purifying, from whence it is called the *water of separation*, (Num. xix. 9;) but the purification itself was performed by *washing the* WHOLE BODY *in water*, (ver. 19.)' So says Mr Jenkins. But I read of *no command* given by Moses in any part of the chapter, that the unclean should wash his *whole body;* and, therefore, we have no Scripture warrant to say that he did so. But Mr Jenkins is, I think, very bold, in that he further adds:—'The apostle's argument loses all its force without this explication; for his (the apostle's) meaning is, that if the sprinkling before mentioned did not even purify the flesh, but only separate *for* that purification, how much more,' &c. Here, again, the apostle is made to *mean what he doth not plainly say;* and for what reason I know not, except it be this, that the apostle's words have a plain tendency to disprove the notion of *corporal immersion* being essential to baptism. But Mr Jenkins, in my opinion, has quite mistaken both *Moses* and the *apostle;* for the water *sprinkled* is again and again called a *purification for sin*, and is said to purify the unclean by its being sprinkled on him; but his *washing himself* is not so much as once said to *cleanse* or *purify from sin*. But though Mr Jenkins has ventured to assert that 'without *his* explanation, the apostle's argument is weak, and loses all its force,' I, for my part, think quite the reverse; for the apostle's argument seems to me clear, strong, and conclusive from his own words, and much better *without* Mr Jenkins' explanation than with it. For the apostle is not, in that place, telling the Jews what the law and its ordinances *could not* do, but what it *could* do for them, *as pertaining to the flesh*. The apostle argues from the less to the greater, and his reasoning is intended to persuade the *believing Jews* to *continue in the faith;* as also to encourage sinners at large, however guilty and defiled in themselves, to come to Christ, that their sins may be *pardoned* and *purged* through faith in His

blood, and by Him to draw near unto God with full assurance of faith, not doubting but He will graciously accept them, through the death and mediation of His own Son, even Jesus Christ, who once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, that He might bring us to God. This, I think, is the plain scope and sense of the passage; 'for if,' says the apostle, 'the blood of calves and of goats, and the ashes of an heifer sprinkling the unclean, sanctifieth unto the purifying of the flesh, how much more shall the blood of Christ, who through the Eternal Spirit offered Himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God?'

§ 33. "*Thirdly,* God having raised up and sent His servant Moses to be the *deliverer* of His people from Egyptian bondage, and to lead them through the wilderness to the borders of Canaan, the children of Israel are said to have been *baptized unto Moses* (as their leader and commander to follow him) *in* or *by* the cloud and *by* the sea, (1 Cor. x. 2.) But that they were properly *in* neither is manifest, for they walked *on dry ground* through the midst of the sea, and the cloud was high above them; therefore they were all baptized *by sprinkling,* unless you can suppose persons to be baptized by water *when they do not so much as touch the element;* which supposition, in my opinion, is highly *unreasonable* and *absurd.* It is said, indeed, by some:—'Here is an *allusion* to the custom of immersion, the Israelites being, as it were, covered by the cloud *over,* and the waters on each side of them.' But this is *barely asserted,* without producing any scripture in support of it, or giving any good reason for it. Besides, the apostle, as if foreseeing such kind of *evasions,* and to guard us against being deceived by them, changes the preposition ὑπο, which he used in the first clause of the sentence, into ἐν in the next; which he needed not have done, but would, I conceive, have more properly retained it, had he intended to speak of the *manner* of their baptism as representing the mode of immersion; for he says they were all ὑπο, *under,* the cloud, and then immediately adds, were all baptized unto Moses, not ὑπο, *under,* or *by being under the cloud,* but ἐν, *by* or *with* the cloud and *with* the sea,—that is, with the waters of both *sprinkled* upon them. This, I think, is the most proper and *natural sense* of the passage.

"*Fourthly,* As in the law of Moses, so in the writings of the prophets who lived many ages after, the same spiritual benefits are

by *them* also represented and said to be *given* and *applied* to us in a way of *pouring* or *sprinkling*, but nowhere, that I can find, by a mode of dipping or immersion. 'I,' saith God, 'will *pour water* upon him that is thirsty; I will pour *my Spirit* upon thy seed,' (Isa. xliv. 3;) and again, 'He shall *sprinkle* many nations,' (Isa. lii. 15;) and again, 'I will *sprinkle clean water* upon you, and ye shall be *clean;* from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I *cleanse* you, &c.; I will *put my Spirit* within you,' &c, (Ezek. xxxvi. 25–27.) We are here expressly told that God would *cleanse* His people from all their uncleanness by *sprinkling* clean water upon them; those, then, whom God *so cleanses* 'are clean every whit,' and need not to be *immersed*, but *sprinkled* only. Do not those persons, then, greatly err who venture to assert there is *no washing* but by *dipping*, and speak of sprinkling as a religious mode of washing, by way of *derision*, though God hath expressly declared that He would *wash* or *cleanse* His people from all their uncleanness by sprinkling clean water upon them?

§ 34. "*Fifthly, Baptizo*, in the New Testament, as I conceive, signifies to *wash* or *purify* by *sprinkling* or pouring; so I think it means, Acts i. 5, 'John truly baptized with water, but ye shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit.' The word *baptize* hath undoubtedly the same meaning in both parts of the verse; to say immersion is implied in the word is *begging the question.* Now it is certain that believers were baptized with the Spirit by its being *poured* upon them, and as John's manner of baptizing is expressed by the *same word*, it seems to me necessarily to follow that the *mode* was the same in both; especially as John's baptizing with water seems to have been a *sign* or *emblem* of Christ's baptizing with the Holy Spirit. This, in my humble opinion, gives us the *true idea*, and *fixes* the sense of the word *baptizo*, as it was used and intended to be understood by the *inspired apostles* and *evangelists*; and all that the advocates for immersion have said or urged to the contrary, from Matt. iii. 16, John iii. 23, Acts viii. 38, Rom. vi. 3–5, or any other part of Scripture, amounts, in my opinion, to no more than *mere hypothesis.*

"It is said, indeed, by way of *objection*, 'that the *pouring* of the Spirit on the apostles is *called baptism* by way of *allusion* to that of *immersion;* because the house in which the apostles were then assembled was *filled with it.*' But *how* doth the objector *know* that this is the reason why it is called baptism? The Scripture

nowhere gives *this* as a reason for it; consequently, we have *no warrant from Scripture* to say or believe it. The apostles were in the house *before* the Spirit filled it, so that there was nothing like *dipping* in the case; but in *immersion* the place is *first filled* with water *before the person is put into it.* But further; the apostle Peter being one of the twelve who were baptized with the Spirit on the day of Pentecost, has I think plainly shewed there was no reference to any *mode* of baptism but that of *pouring.* For speaking to the people on that very occasion, he says, 'This is that which was spoken by the prophet Joel; And it shall come to pass in the last days, saith God, I will *pour out my Spirit* upon all flesh, and upon my servants, and upon my handmaids will I *pour out of my Spirit,*' (Acts ii. 16–18.) Consequently, the *pouring of the Spirit on them* was their being *baptized* with the Spirit, *without any respect to the place in which they were,* whether in a *house* or in the *open fields.* Now I have examined and considered those texts on which our opponents lay the greatest stress, and it does not appear to me that immersion is plainly declared in *any one* of them; or that it can be inferred with certainty from *circumstances,* or from any of the *prepositions* there made use of, that it has in those passages the sense of dipping under water.

"Had indeed the Scripture directed or given a command for this manner of dipping, they that do it would be justified in the practice of it; but I do not find that the Scripture anywhere warrants the practice either by *precept* or *example.* Is not this manner of *dipping,* then, a mere *human invention* or act of *will-worship,* in administering the ordinance of baptism?

"I believe the Baptists themselves are altogether at a loss to point out the manner of John's baptizing those who came to him for that purpose, whether *with* or *without* a covering. Nor can they, as I suppose, assign any good reason why the Scripture should be totally silent about it, but this only: that he baptized not by *immersion,* but by *sprinkling,* for the Jews were well acquainted with the *latter,* and often read of it in their Scriptures; but of the *former,* I conceive, they were totally ignorant; it not being practised or commanded in their law. Those Baptists also with whom I have conversed on this particular are *divided* in their opinions about it. None of them believe that a proper *bathing dress* was provided for them on the occasion; but some have told me they supposed them to have been baptized in their

ordinary apparel; others, *without any covering at all.* But surely, as *decency* must forbid the *latter*, so I think their *health* and safety will strongly militate against the *former.* Now the silence of Scripture in this point is easily, and I think rationally, accounted for, and every difficulty removed, on the supposition that John baptized not by dipping them under water, but by *sprinkling* water upon them. As, then, the *pouring of the Spirit* on a believer is baptism with the Spirit, *pouring of water* on him must, I think, of necessity be baptism with water." * There is little need of an apology (at least to Mr B.) for the *quantity of quotation* here produced; as the *arguments* urged by this *Anti-pædobaptist* writer are, perhaps, no less weighty and pertinent than all Mr B.'s boasted *concessions* put together.

§ 35. Dr Gale justly remarks:—"One would wonder a thing of this nature should be capable of so much dispute: for if it is *not instituted,* it ought *not* to be *practised;* and if *it be* instituted, it should seem *impossible* for any *not* to *see* it. We are confident He has declared His will to us, in this and all other articles of like consequence, with all *necessary evidence;* and what He hath not taught us with a *sufficient clearness,* He *never designed* for the object of obedience."† It therefore follows, that in proportion as we extend our charitable opinion to the *integrity, Christian honesty,* and *moderate capacity* of the numerous list of authors lately quoted, our Lord "*never designed* for the object of our obedience" the *plunging any under water,* for the purpose of Christian baptism, who had been *before* solemnly admitted into the visible Church of Christ by having pure *water poured on* them, whereby they were *tinged, washed,* or ceremonially *purified,* that is, *baptized,* in the name of the Father, Son, and Spirit.

The same author has the following remarkable declaration:—"The word *βαπτίζω*, perhaps, does not so necessarily express the *action* of putting under water, as *in general* the thing's being in *that condition,* no matter how it comes so, whether it is put into the water, or the water comes *over it;* though indeed to put it into the water is the *most natural* and the *most common,* and is therefore *usually* and pretty constantly, but it may be *not necessarily,* implied."‡ This judicious reflection was occasioned by a passage in Aristotle, (De Mirabil. Auscult.) "They relate," says

* Mr Elliot's Dipping not Baptizing, chap. ii., passim.

† Reflections on Wall's History, p. 91. ‡ Ibid., p. 117.

he, "of the Phœnicians, who inhabit a place called Gadeira, [or Cadiz,] that sailing beyond the Pillars of Hercules, with an east wind four days, they came to certain desert places full of bulrushes and sea-weeds: which when it is at ebb (*μὴ βαπτίζεσθαι*) *are not wet*, but when it is flowing tide (*κατακλυζεσθαι*) *are overwhelmed.*" How pertinent the above reflection, as founded on this passage! *The word does not express the action, but condition. No matter how it comes so. To put a thing into the water, when baptized, not necessarily implied.* But on the following clause we must distinguish:—"To put a thing into the water is the most *natural* and the most *common*, and is therefore *usually* and *pretty constantly* implied." If not *always* implied, who is to decide that it is *requisite* in the Christian ordinance? It is neither *natural* nor *common* for a coast to be *plunged* into the sea. The question then returns: since the application of the *thing to the water*, or the application of the *water to the thing*, depends on the nature and circumstances of the *thing itself*, which of these modes of application is the most natural, common, and convenient, in reference to a *human person?* Impartiality replies, *both modes* are natural, and both are common, for different purposes. A nurse, for instance, *washes* a child *without* immersion; but for medical purposes brings it into a *state of wetness by* immersion. The same may be observed of adults: the *mode* is natural and common according to the *end* proposed, whether for mere pleasure, for cleansing, for medical purposes, or for *moral ends*, &c. But the application in Christian baptism being for *moral ends*, the question comes now closer: What mode of application is the most natural, and most commodious, and therefore *ought* to be the most common? We answer: That which *most fitly* represents the principal thing signified thereby. And this being the imparted influences of the Spirit, the mode of applying the significant *element to the subject* is most proper.

§ 36. But the Doctor still objects:—"*Βαπτίζεσθαι* being used here to signify the land was under water, by the waters *coming in upon it*, and not by its being *put into the water*, some perhaps may think it a considerable objection: but it will be found of no advantage to our adversaries, if it be observed that it here necessarily and unavoidably imports to be *under water*, or to be overwhelmed or covered with water."* I think not. For Aristotle

* Ibid., p. 116.

only says, "The places were not *baptized;*" which we are sure *means not plunged,* or *dipped;* which we are equally sure *does* mean *wet,* as opposed to *dry;* but have no grounds to say it means "*to be under water,*" without begging the question.

But how shall we reconcile the foregoing concession with the following bold assertion? "I cannot see but the word *baptize necessarily includes dipping* in its signification."* Now, *dipping* is *essential;* before, *dipping* was not *necessarily implied.* What contradiction! In the following words the defiance becomes more strong and loud:—"I may challenge any man to shew a *single instance* of it, except in some ecclesiastical writers of the later corrupt times, who, retaining the words of the institution, and altering the thing, do, in this case indeed, but no other, extend the word into a *wider sense;* but *profane* authors, who lay under no such biases, have made no such alteration. It is evident from *them,* the *primary* meaning is simply *to dip,* not only into water, but any matter."† But what is this else than to build with one hand, and to pull down with another? Was not Aristotle a profane author? And does not he use the word, *in a plain narration,* where it would have been *absurd* to speak by an extravagant *figure,* in a sense which *excludes* dipping? Whereas, if we consider the word *βαπτίζω* as a *generic term* here, as we have shewn it to be in the Septuagint, Apocrypha, and New Testament, the sense is *natural* and *plain* without a figure. "The places were not *wet* at low water." But would *any historian* or *philosopher,* much less an Aristotle, say, "The places were *not plunged* at low water!" Dipping is an *action;* and if the term does not necessarily express the *action* of putting under water, it does not necessarily express *dipping.* Besides, "a thing's being *in general* in the condition of being under water, no matter how it comes so," makes the term to be evidently *general;* as what is intended by it may be effected by *different modes,* such as affusion, perfusion, immersion, inundation, &c.

But "the *primary* meaning is simply *to dip.*" By what *evidence* is this assertion supported? *Quod mere assertur, mere negari sufficit.* A bare *denial* is sufficient to a mere assertion. What is the fairest and most equitable rule for deciding this matter? Must not that be properly and truly the *primary* meaning of a term, to which all the various acceptations of it in approved authors *ulti-*

* Reflections on Wall's History, p. 94. † Ibid., pp. 94, 95.

mately and most naturally refer, as the branches of a tree to one common stock, or the several species to a common genus? And if two or more meanings be set up as competitors for that primariness, how shall their respective claims be ascertained, but by appealing to authors where the term is used, and to the common sense of capable judges? If *all* the instances produced, or that may be produced, refer to the *one* in a *plain* and *easy* manner, but many of them cannot refer to the *other* without the supposition of extravagant *figures* and *elliptical* supplies, common sense determines that the former has the most equitable claim. Whichever stands *clearest* of all *just exception* that may be brought against it from approved authors, when duly examined and compared, must needs have the best title to the *primary meaning*.

Now I, also, in my turn, "challenge any man to shew a *single instance*" which is not plainly and naturally compatible with what I have all along insisted on as the *primary meaning* of *βαπτίζω*— viz., sacramentally, to *purify;* and philologically, to *tinge, wet, stain,* to *impregnate* with a different substance or quality, &c. In both cases the word is a *genus,* and, consequently, cannot be dipping, which is a *specific action.* To produce instances where dipping is implied does not affect my doctrine; for I maintain, in perfect consistency with it, that dipping is a *secondary* meaning, and, therefore, wherever it is used for dipping, it is used in a *secondary* sense, But this secondary acceptation never destroys or offers violence to the primary, but *implies* it. Now, the meaning which Dr Gale sets up as a candidate for primariness needs no other evidence to lay aside its pretensions than several of those very instances which he himself has produced in support of what he patronises. And in proportion as these instances, to which he appeals as the supporters of his hypothesis, are incompatible with it, while, at the same time, they perfectly agree with that for which I contend, they may be not improperly ranked among the *concessions* of our opponents.

§ 37. The following instance, from Homer, will shew that the idea of *dipping* is absolutely *excluded* from the term, which, for that reason, cannot possibly be the *primary* meaning of it. In his *Batrachomyomachia,* or the ludicrous poem of the "Battle of the Mice and Frogs," he represents one of the *croaking* champions struck with a panic, and fallen into the lake. Then one of the *nibbling* heroes gave him a deadly wound; "he ceased to breathe,

(ἐβαπτετο δι' αἱματι λίμνη,) and the lake was *tinged* with blood."* Dr Gale takes no small pains to make this passage tally with his hypothesis; but it is "labour in vain." He begins with *supposing* what should have been *proved*:—"The phrase, we must consider, is borrowed from the *dyers*, who *colour* things by *dipping* them in their dye; and to *this* the poet plainly *alludes*." Pray, how did the Doctor know that the phrase is "borrowed from the *dyers?*" Had he any right or reason in saying this? Was not the *natural* or *accidental staining* equally open to the poet as the *artificial* one? And why must he go such an *unnatural round* to *borrow* of the dyer what his own beloved storehouse, nature, contained in greater perfection? Or, if borrowed from *art*, in opposition to nature, why may not another say—"The phrase, we must consider, is *borrowed* from the *stainers* or *painters*, who colour things *without dipping* them, but lay the varnish, stain, or colour on; and to *this* the poet plainly alludes?"

"*Dyers colour things by dipping them in their dye.*" What things? Let us not *confound* things. The question is not how they colour *wool, cloth*, &c., but how their *water* in the vat is coloured by the *βάμμα*, the *materia tinctoria?* If it be absurd to say, that they *dip* the water to make it red, purple, &c., it must be equally so to suppose the word refers to that specific mode of tinging which is by dipping. In this passage the *colouring matter* is the gasping croaker's *blood*, which turns the colour of the lake as the dyer's *ingredients* do the water in the vat; if there be any allusion at all to the art.

"*Not that the lake was* ACTUALLY DIPPED *in blood, but deeply stained.*" Here is a fair concession of my point. For the lake *was actually tinged* or stained, but *not dipped* at all. Having thus yielded the cause which he undertook to defend, in the plainest terms, our author shuffles again by adding:—"To heighten our idea, he expresses it, with the usual liberty of poets, by a word which signifies more than what is strictly true, which is the nature of all *hyperboles*." That there is an hyperbole in the description I grant; but deny that any part of the figure is contained in the word ἐβαπτετο. For, that so trifling a quantity of blood as could

* It is observable that Dr Gale himself renders the word here, *tinged;* and Mr Parnell, corrected by Mr Pope, thus:—

> "Gasping he rolls, a purple stream of blood
> *Distains* the surface of the silver flood."—Book iii., line 47.

issue from the wound of a *frog*, should be supposed to tinge a whole *lake*, is extremely hyperbolical of itself; and to suppose that the poet involves in the same phrase *another* hyperbole of the most unnatural and extravagant kind without any necessity, (*cæt. par.*,) is to demand a licence in criticism which the most licentious poet would be ashamed to require. Thus the literal sense is, *the lake was* TINGED *with blood;* but the *figure* consists in ascribing so prodigious an effect to so small a cause.

"But ὥσπερ, ὡσανεὶ, &c., are to be *understood* here to qualify the seeming extravagance of the expression." Indeed, were the extravagance only a *seeming* one, some relief may be had from such auxiliaries; but what license can justify a *real* extravagance? Is it *possible or congruous in nature* for a lake to be *dipped?* If not, the supposition of "*as it were*," or "*as if it had been*," has no tendency at all to mend the matter. Or, is it *natural*, on supposition of a metaphor, to compare the *lake* to the dyer's cloth or wool, rather than his *vat?* Whereas if we suppose an allusion to the *latter*, the idea will be clear and striking, though highly metaphorical, thus:—"The whole water of the lake was so greatly coloured with the croaker's blood, as if it had been the water in a dyer's copper, strongly impregnated with an ingredient deeply red."

On the whole, it appears that Homer (for the poem is generally ascribed to him) uses the word βάπτω in this place in the sense which I call *primary*, without any figure at all—viz., to *tinge*, to *impregnate* with humidity, colour, &c., by this or the other mode, according to circumstances, and as the nature of the case requires. But whenever βάπτω signifies to dip or plunge, "it continues to signify the *same thing*, in some respect or other;" for in that case we may say, that the allusion is not only to the *dyeing* itself, but also to the usual *mode* of impregnating cloth, wool, &c., with the intended colour; and, which deserves peculiar notice, the term never signifies to dip *for its own sake*, but always as a mean or mode of effecting something else, even as dipping is *in order to dye.*

§ 38. Aristophanes (*Ιππεις*, act 1., scen. iii.) observes that Magnes, an old comedian of Athens, used to shave the face, and (βαπτομενος βατραχειοις) "*stain* it with tawny colours." On which passage Dr Gale thus reflects:—"He speaks of the homely entertainments of the ancient theatre, where the actors *daubed*

themselves with lees of wine, and any odd colours, before Æschylus reformed it, and introduced the use of masks and vizors. Aristophanes expresses this by *βαπτομενος βατραχειοις*; *not that he supposes they* DIPPED *their faces* INTO *the colour, but rather* SMEARED *the colour* ON *their faces.*" Having thus yielded his cause, by what expedient does our author attempt to recover it? *Here is a manifest allusion to the art of dyeing.* To whom is it manifest? It is not self-evident, and the Doctor offers not the least hint to prove it; nor does there appear to me any sufficient reason assignable for the assertion. But I have this reason *against* the assertion. It is not fair, nor agreeable to the just rules of criticism, to interpret the words of an author allusively, improperly, and metaphorically, except when plain *necessity* urges. But here is no necessity, even pretended, but what arises from a begging of the question in dispute. What a roundabout way is it, nay, how absurd, to make the writer, in relating a *plain fact*, use a language so highly metaphorical, without any manner of necessity? To say that the old comedian *stained, tinged, besmeared* his face, or the like, is plain and direct; what need, then, of supposing that it was *so besmeared as if* it had been *dyed*, which dyeing as an *art* is usually (though not necessarily) performed by the *means* or *mode* of dipping? Were it indeed once *allowed* that the word literally signifies *to dip*, the laws of criticism would require a metaphorical interpretation; for, as it is well known, the improper and figurative use of terms does not *alter* the literal sense, otherwise the very foundation of figures and allusions would be destroyed. But this I will not allow, without further evidence. On the contrary, I insist that it literally signifies to *tinge*, or the like, and that in the place under consideration the word is used in its *literal* import.

Again, Aristotle says, (Hist. Animal., lib. v., cap. 15:)—"But when pressed (*βαπτει καὶ ἀνθίζει τὴν χεῖρα*) it *tinges* the hand, and gives it a florid colour." If the word in *such places*, to borrow the Doctor's language, "signifies literally nothing but to *dip*, &c., the sense, if it must be supposed there can be any, will be absurd, as well as most grossly false. For, indeed, what can be more ridiculous, than for a man seriously to talk of dipping a lake or river, &c., in blood? or of a lady's dipping her face in vermilion, when she adorns it with artificial colour; which, on the contrary, it is known must be more artfully laid on?" or, to say

that a man's hand must needs be *dipped*, else it cannot be *tinged* when it presses or squeezes a juicy substance? "I readily grant," adds our author, "the words, as they stand in the passages referred to, *are not literally true*. And if it could be imagined the authors *intended they should be literally understood*, they would appear very *ridiculous*, and deserve the utmost *contempt*." True, on *his* hypothesis, but not on *mine*. For what can be a more natural and conspicuous meaning, than that a lake is *tinged* with blood; the face or hand *stained* with any tingent liquid? *For a man seriously to talk of* DIPPING *in such cases is ridiculous*. But Aristotle talks of a matter of fact, and that with his usual philosophic *seriousness;* therefore, to ascribe to the Stagyrite so figurative a language as "it plunges, or dips the hand," for "it stains, or colours the hand" is (*cæt. par.*) highly absurd.

"There is another passage in Aristophanes," says the Doctor, "*very strong* to the same purpose, [*i.e.*, in favour of the essentiality of dipping,] which, however, some perhaps may fancy favours the contrary: it is in his 'Parliament of Women.'" And pray what is this boasted passage, which is so *strong* against us? Why the poet observes:—"First (*βαπτουσι*) they *wash* the wool in warm water, according to the old custom." And what has the Reflector to say on it? You shall hear:—"Here the word implies *washing*, as Mr Wall would have it; and Suidas and Phavorinus interpret it by *πλυνουσι*, which Pliny on another occasion renders *eluunt, i.e., they wash out;* and Stephens says it signifies *lavo*." Was not Mr Wall, and are not his other opponents, highly obliged to him for this *concession?* No doubt. But the merit of the deed, notwithstanding, is not great. For he endeavours to retake what he so freely gave. Nay, he thinks to gain advantage by it:—"Instead of prejudicing," says he, "this will be found greatly to *confirm* my cause; for in *washing*, wool is, and must be, *dipped* and put into the water." But let us not forget, that the *washing* here implied allowedly and incontestably signifies the *cleansing* of the wool; and it is equally clear, that such cleansing is not *implied* in the dipping of it, or that the scouring intended is not the *necessary effect* of dipping; consequently, that dipping is *inadequate* to express the meaning. *Washing* implies *more* than dipping, denoting something *over and above* that. We would, therefore, fain know, if *βαπτουσι* signifies literally neither more nor less than *they dip*, by what figure of speech, and by what canon

of criticism, it comes to signify, and should be rendered, *lavo, eluo,* to *wash,* to *wash out?* When this is done, we, in our turn, will engage, on the same principles, to shew that *βάπτω* is a *generic term.*

But wool is and must be dipped in order to wash it. Were Dr Gill's doctrine true, "that there is no washing but by dipping," this would be an easy consequence. But this strange *ipse dixit* needs no other argument to confront it than a *clean face.* However, "*wool must be dipped.*" If the meaning be, "it is *absolutely necessary* for its being cleansed by water" to *dip* it in, I deny the assertion; and, on the contrary, insist, that plain ocular demonstration lies against it. Whereas all cleansing by water implies, necessarily, what I maintain is the *primary* meaning of *βάπτω.*

§ 39. Marcus Antoninus, (lib. iii., § 4,) speaking of a man of real worth, says:—"He is one (*δικαιοσύνη βεβαμμενον εἰς βάθος*) *justitia penitus imbutum,* thoroughly *seasoned* or *imbued* with justice." Again (lib. v., § 16) he says:—"Your mind will be such as the things you most often think of; for the soul (*βαπτεται*) is *imbued,* or *tinctured,* by the thoughts. Therefore, (*βαπτε*) *imbue, tincture,* or *season* it with frequent thoughts of this kind," &c. Once more (lib. vi., § 30:)—"See that you be not conformed to the Cæsars, (*μὴ βαφῆς*) lest you be *stained,* or *infected.*" Of this last instance Dr Gale acknowledges, "That the period [that is, on *his* hypothesis] is extremely elliptical, and stands in need of supplements to make out the sense in another language, wherein that defective form is not in use." But whether it stands in need of *his* supplementary aid, *as it were dipped,* let the following annotation of the very learned Gataker on the place testify:—"Ne *tingaris,* ne *inficiaris:* ne mores aulici genuinum animi *candorem obfuscent:* quod, *inquinamentum combibere,* Septimius dixit, (De Spectac., c. 14.)" He then refers to Homer, (Il., iv., 141,) as an illustration:—

Ὡς δ' ὅτε τίς τι ελεφαντα γυνὴ φοίνικι μιήνῃ.*

* "As when some stately trappings are decreed
To grace a monarch on his bounding steed,
A nymph, in Caria or Mæonia bred,
Stains the pure ivory with a lively red;
With equal lustre various colours vie,
The shining whiteness, and the Tyrian dye:
So, great Atrides! shew'd thy sacred blood,
As down thy snowy thigh distill'd the streaming flood."—*Pope.*

"We may learn from hence," says Mr Pope, "that the Lydians and Carians

Also to Virgil, (Æn., xii., 67 :)—

> "Indum sanguineo veluti violaverit ostro
> Si quis ebur"——*

And afterwards subjoins :—"Quod nos diceremus," *That you be not* STAINED : "nam quod Græci *μιαίνειν* et *βάπτειν*, nos dicimus" *to* STAIN.

Plato (De Repub., lib. iv.) compares the method of training up soldiers to the method of giving wool the best dye ; and though the passage be somewhat long, yet the words occurring in different forms seven or eight times may be a sufficient apology for transcribing it :—"Know ye not, said I, that the (*βαφεις*) *dyers*, [Mass., *fullones*,] when they wish (*βαψαι*, *inficere*) to *stain*, *tinge*, or *tincture* wool, that it may be of a purple hue, choose, in preference to all other colours, the whitest of the fleece? Then they prepare and work it with immense pains, that it may take the bloom in the best manner ; and so at length (*βαπτουσι*) they *stain*, or *give the dye* to it. And (*τὸ βαφὴν*) what is *dyed* or *tinctured* becomes unalterably so, when thus (*βαφῇ*) *tinged ;* nor can any washing either by fair water, or any preparations for the purpose, discharge the blooming colour. But what has not been thus prepared, you know how it turns out ; for whether one (*βάπτῃ*) *put on, impregnate it with* that, this, or any other colour, it never looks well. I know, said he, that *such colours* are easily washed out, and have at best but a sordid appearance. Reflect, then, that when we choose soldiers, and instruct them in music and the gymnastic art, it is our wish, as far as in us lies, to effect somewhat similar. We aim at nothing else but to prepare them, in the best manner possible, to receive the laws, which are, as it were, (*βαφὴν,*) *a dye ;* that so their opinion of things, whether direful or otherwise, may be properly and unalterably fixed ; and that, being thus formed by a proper discipline, their (*βαφὴν*) *tincture* may not be washed

were famous in the first times for their *staining* in purple, and that the women excelled in works of ivory."

* "With pity touch'd, the fair Lavinia hears
Her mother's cries, and answers with her tears ;
A lovely blush the modest virgin warms,
Glows in her cheeks, and lights up all her charms ;
So looks the beauteous ivory, *stain'd* with red,
So roses, mix'd with lilies in the bed,
Blend their rich hues"—— —*Pitt.*

out by anything of the most powerfully expelling nature, whether pleasure," &c. The Doctor in reflecting on this passage refers to Gataker's learned note on Marc. Anton., lib. iii., § 4, as tending to illustrate *his assertion*. What assertion he refers to I know not; but if he intends what he asserted at the beginning of his quotations, (p. 94,) "That the word *baptize* necessarily includes diping in its signification," I venture to affirm the note has no such tendency; nor is there one quotation which does not perfectly agree with my general position.

§ 40. Let the foregoing examples, out of many, suffice for the primitive. But what the Doctor grants concerning *βαπτίζω* is, if necessary, still more in our favour:—"Besides," says he, "the word *βαπτίζω* perhaps does not so necessarily express the action of putting under water, as in general a thing's being in that condition, no matter how it comes so, whether it is put into the water, or the water comes over it; though, indeed, to put it into the water is the most natural way and the most common, and is, therefore, usually and pretty constantly, but it may be not necessarily, implied." The passage in Aristotle which extorted this concession, where he says that "the shore was not *baptized* at ebb," we have before considered, to which the reader is referred. (See §§ 35, 36.) Other instances will justify the foregoing concession.

Homer (Il., xvi., 333) describes Ajax killing Cleobulus, thus:—"He struck him across the neck with his heavy sword, (*πᾶν δ' ὑπεθερμάνθη ξίφος αἵματι,*) and the whole sword became *warm* with the blood." Homer's *ὑπεθερμάνθη* is explained by Pseudo-Didymus, by *ἐβαπτισθη*, with a view to shew how much the sword was *imbued, stained,* or *wetted* with the reeking blood. And Dionys. Halicarn. (Concerning the Poetry of Homer, § 7) observes, "that in this phrase there is a peculiar emphasis, which consists in this, that the sword was so (*βαπτισθεντος*) *wetted,* or *stained,* as even to be warmed" with the gushing blood.

Strabo, speaking of Alexander leading his army by a narrow pass between Mount Climax and the sea, observes:—"The soldiers marched a whole day in the water (*βαπτιζομενων*) *being wetted* up to the waist."

Heraclides Ponticus, when moralising the fable which represents Mars as taken in a net by Vulcan, observes:—"Neptune is ingeniously supposed to be rescuing Mars from Vulcan; because, when

a piece of iron thoroughly heated is taken from the forgemen, (ὕδατι βαπτίζεται,) it is *cooled* with water; and the thing forced to a heat, from its own nature, (ὕδατι κατασβεσθεν,) when it has been *extinguished* by water, is restored to rest,"—*i.e.*, the *fire* heating the *iron*, has it in its custody; but *water* applied to it in *any manner* weakens the captivating power of the fire, and, as it were, sets the iron at liberty.

Plutarch, in his Treatise of Education, compares the method of instructing children to that of *watering* plants:—"For as plants are nourished by moderate waterings, but pine away if these are *too frequent;* in like manner, the mind by well-proportioned labours is improved, but when these are more than enough (βαπτίζεται) it is *drenched.*" The comparison is evidently introduced, as appears by the connexion, to shew the impropriety of teaching children *too many* things at once.

"If this passage should seem a little *obscure,*" says Dr Gale, "I must refer you, sir, to what I have said before." I do not wonder that this place appeared *obscure* to the Doctor, while viewing it through the medium of *his* hypothesis; but while an impartial eye views it through any *other* medium, it appears sufficiently *perspicuous.* The intelligent reader will easily perceive that all the *obscurity* consists in Plutarch's comparing the *baptizing* of children's minds, while their teachers instill various instructions into them, to a gardener's *pouring water* upon his plants!

The last-mentioned author, (Paral. Græc. Rom.,) speaking of a Roman general a little before he died of his wound, says:—"He set up a trophy, and (βαπτίσας) *wetting,* or *staining* his hand in the blood, he wrote this inscription," &c.

The only apology I shall make for dwelling so long on a subject which to some readers may appear prolix, is one drawn up for another purpose, yet perfectly suited to my design:—"A thing of this nature, and so evident, did not indeed need to have been so largely treated as it has already been; but the *unaccountable tenacity* of our antagonists has made it necessary to be very particular." *

To conclude; this branch of evidence from *profane* writers, produced by Dr Gale in support of his own hypothesis, with his remarkable concessions, may be pertinently closed with his conclud-

* Dr Gale's Reflections, p. 122.

ing sentence a little improved:—"I know," says he, "it [*βαπτίζω*] signifies to *wash* as a *consequence* of *dipping;* but so likewise it does to wet, colour, dye," &c. The improvement, as the just result of the preceding examination, stands thus:—I know it signifies to *dip*, as a *mode* of *washing;* so likewise it does of wetting, colouring, dyeing, &c.

§ 41. Before I dismiss this opponent, I must not omit an examination of his appeal to the doctrine of *genus* and *species*, which, if I am not in a great mistake, amounts to a fair *concession* in favour of my principle. "I need not," says he, "repeat the observations of logicians about their *genera* and *species;* yet give me leave only to transcribe one canon from Aristotle, (Topic., lib. iv., cap. 1:)—'The *species* includes the definition of the *genus*, and all that is in it, but not *vice versâ*.' Dipping includes washing, but washing does not include dipping; for there may be a washing by pouring," &c.* To this may be added the following words of Mr Jenkins, in a small pamphlet lately published:—"There is a remark which I wonder is not more attended to by the writers on baptism, because I think it may be depended on as a *canon of criticism*, and would reduce the dispute about the meaning of this word [*baptize*] into a very small compass; I mean, that 'where a word is used in a *primary* and *secondary* sense, the *secondary* sense can never contradict the *primary*, but must carry in it that leading idea; as in natural history, every *species* must carry in it the leading idea of the *genus* that comprehends it.' The contrary supposition involves an absurdity, and renders the meaning of words totally sceptical. . . . . For my own part," adds the same author, "I am confident also, that without maintaining this remark, the Baptist ministers will never be able to establish immersion as the exclusive meaning of the word; for though it may be admitted that in *some* cases it signifies to dip, it will be as strenuously insisted that in *other* cases it signifies to sprinkle, and that this mode is as good as the other." †

It may well appear wonderful to any thoughtful person, that our opponents should attempt to explain and defend their cause by the aids of these logical distinctions. For, on *their* hypothesis, the distinction of *genera* and *species* is absolutely precluded. If dipping be a *genus*, what is the *species?* If it be said, *dipping*,

* Reflections, p. 176. † Beauty of Believers' Baptism, p. 6, *note*.

this makes both to be one and the same thing, which is absurd. If they say, *washing*, or wetting, colouring, dyeing, &c., are species, this is equally absurd, and directly contradictory to the canon referred to. For Aristotle and common sense declare "that the species *partake of*, or necessarily *imply*, the genera, but not the contrary;" as *white* is a *colour*, a *lion* is an *animal*, an *angel* is a *creature*, but not *vice versâ*. Consequently, according to the canon, and on the supposition, to *wash* is to *dip*, to *wet* is to *dip*, to *colour* is to *dip*, &c. Which is just as true as, to *sprinkle* is to *dip;* for there may be wetting *without* dipping as well as sprinkling *without* dipping. Now it is a mere *evasion* to say that washing, wetting, &c., may be done *by* dipping; for if there be *any washing, any wetting*, &c., which does *not include* dipping, washing and wetting cannot be a species of dipping. For as Aristotle observes, (Topic., lib. iv., cap. i., § 2,) we should consider, *Εἰ τίνος μή κατηγορειται*, whether there be any species to which the genus is not applicable? Thus, to borrow the Stagyrite's illustration, if we say that *good* is the genus of *pleasure;* we should inquire, whether there be *any pleasure* which is *not implied* in *good:* for, then, it is manifest, good is not the genus of pleasure, because the genus is predicable by *all the species* contained under it. Then we should consider, that if anything may be, or may not be, applied to the supposed genus, that supposed genus is but an accident. For instance, if it be predicated of anything that it is white, and not white, white cannot be the genus, but an accident; because we call that an accident which may or may not be in a thing.* In like manner, if we say that wetting is by dipping, and without dipping, it follows that dipping is not a genus but an *accident*, or *mode* of wetting. Dr Gill seemed to be aware of these absurd consequences, when, to avoid them, he ventured on this assertion, which is fairly confuted, to ocular demonstration, ten thousand times every day, "That there is no washing but by dipping!" Desperate indeed must be the cause that requires such aids!

Again, if our opponents fix upon *dipping* for a genus, they would do well to *demonstrate* that what they call a genus is possessed of *any species* whatever; for it cannot be that what partakes of no species may partake of a genus.† But that *dipping*

* Vide Aristot. Topic., lib. iv, cap. i., § 4. † Ibid., lib. iv., cap. i., § 8, et passim.

is possessed of *any species*, or consequently is at all a *genus*, is, I suppose, what no one will deliberately *undertake* to shew, at least will be able to *prove*, while the logical world stands.

"*Dipping includes washing, but washing does not include dipping.*" This is to say, that *dipping* is a *species*, and *washing* is the *genus*. Then it follows—if *βαπτίζω* be a *generic* term, as we have abundantly proved it is, or be in some cases applied where dipping is not necessarily included, as Dr Gale grants—that dipping is only a *species* of baptizing; and, consequently, that there may be a *baptizing without dipping:* which was to be demonstrated.

§ 42. "We may venture to assert," says Mr B., "that the word baptism *certainly* signifies immersion, whatever meaning it may have *besides;* consequently, both candour and prudence require us to embrace that acceptation in *preference* to any other." Very true; they must be rather *uncandid*, and perhaps *imprudent*, who deny immersion to be a *species* of baptizing, for that evidently *includes* wetting, tinging, a contaction of the person and the element, &c. And, for the same reason, we can have no high opinion either of the *candour* or *prudence* of those who deny that water poured or sprinkled on a person (*cæt. par.*) are *species* of baptizing; for either of these *includes* wetting, tinging, &c., and *that* not less *certainly* than the other Do candour and prudence seem to require any to adopt the mode of immersing the subject in *preference* to any other? far be it from us to *condemn* as a *nullity* what our brethren conscientiously believe proceeds from so respectable an authority, and which we are satisfied is *one mode* of baptizing. But do these amiable virtues require any to *condemn* as a *nullity* what other brethren (may I add, without offence, *equally conscientious?*) believe to be *most agreeable* to the Divine Legislator's meaning? Is there any *virtue* in making that the badge of parties and carnal divisions in the Church which was graciously intended as a bond of general union? Is it probable, is it possible, that the Head of His Church should require that as the *condition* of membership which numbers, who truly love Him and who adore His authority, can see *no evidence* for, after laborious and prayerful inquiries? Was that censure of honest Mr Bunyan, who was himself a Baptist, too severe? "In my simple opinion, your rigid and church-disquieting principles are not fit for any age and state of the Church. I say they are babes, and carnal, that attempt to break the peace and communion of

churches, though upon no better pretences than *water*. I am still of that mind, and shall be, so long as I see the effects that follow —viz., the breach of LOVE, taking off Christians from the more weighty things of God, and to make them quarrel and have heart-burnings one against another."* It must be allowed that Mr B. has far surpassed his predecessors, and, therefore, deserves the *palm*, in the glorious contest of "*setting the Pædobaptists together by the ears;*" † but how happy should I be if my humble attempt should procure me the less splendid honour of *peace-maker* among *brethren*, children of the same family, and alike beloved of their heavenly Father in all other respects, yet, on account of baptism, falling out by the way!

§ 43. From the preceding investigation we may draw the following obvious *corollaries*:—

First Coroll.—If the terms *baptize* and *baptism* are generic terms, comprehending different specific *modes* of ceremonial purification, "the mode is *variable* according to circumstances." Now, where a positive Divine law is not *express*, or where any *latitude* is implied in the terms of it, the *law of nature*, the principles of *right reason*, of *Christian prudence*, and *common sense*, "*require* us to embrace that acceptation, in *preference* to any other," which is least burdensome and inconvenient. The *part* of the globe in which we live, the *civil* customs of a country, the *conduct* of our Lord and His apostles in reference to these things, and many other *circumstances*, "*require* us to embrace" what is most conformable to national decency and propriety, *when no Divine law*, on the supposition, *enjoins* one circumstance of an action in preference to another.

§ 44. *Second Coroll.*—Since the mode is free and variable, the practice of the *Greek Church*, which our opponents so often remind us of, is of no importance when urged against us.‡ Nor do we suppose that *another circumstance* of baptism observed by them, the *trine immersion*, which is undoubtedly of considerable antiquity, is sufficient to *nullify* the ordinance. Though our opponents may find it, perhaps, as difficult to reconcile *three* immersions and *one* dipping, (Eph. iv. 5,) as *their* immersion and *our* baptism.

§ 45. *Third Coroll.*—From the premises it also follows, that

* Works, vol. i., pp. 151, 152. † See Monthly Rev., vol. lxxxi., p. 212.
‡ See Pædobaptism Examined, chap. v., passim.

the primitive custom, though it were dipping invariably, will not support the *essentiality* of dipping.* "A question this," says Mr B., "which regards both *fact* and *right*." That I deny; for though it were proved to be *fact*, it would not follow that it was *exclusively* right. If it be meant that the practice of John and the apostles was *valid*, he has no opponents; in *that sense*, therefore, the practice was *right*. But theirs being right or valid does not prove that ours is wrong or invalid, supposing (without granting) that their mode and ours were *different*, if, as we have proved, *baptism* is a generic term, comprehending those supposed different modes. "They had too much knowledge and too much integrity to administer this branch of holy worship in a *wrong* way." Granted. Yet supposing them to have invariably baptized by immersion, (which I do not believe was the fact,) it only proves that they adopted a mode which in their circumstances was eligible, though not exclusively binding. But "they were not ignorant that their *practice* was to be viewed as a *pattern*, and to be considered as a *law*." What, *every part* of their practice? If not,—which, I suppose, no one will be inadvertent enough to affirm,—why the *mode* of baptizing any more than the *mode* of preaching, praying, singing, keeping the Sabbath, &c.?

Mr B. thinks it "strange to astonishment," and "a wonderful phenomenon in the religious world," that a number of authors he refers to "should all unite in one attestation respecting the *primitive* mode of administering this ordinance, even while they *opposed* the Baptists for considering immersion as *absolutely necessary* to a compliance with the Divine command."† On the contrary, I think it a phenomenon neither *strange, astonishing*, nor *wonderful*, but consider it as what might very naturally and rationally be expected, and very tolerably consistent with the dignity of their character as men of learning and religion. If they concluded, as they had sufficient reason to conclude, that the *legal primary* signification of the word *baptize* in the New Testament was *general*,—so *general* at least as not to be *confined* to one mode, —*so general* as to admit *different* modes without pronouncing, or supposing the Divine Lawgiver to pronounce, either of them *invalid*; yet allowing that one particular mode, suppose dipping, prevailed in the primitive Church, which mode is not *necessarily*

* See Pædobaptism Examined, chap. iv., passim.

† Ibid., vol. i., pp. 225, 226.

implied in the law itself, though eligible in *their* circumstances; —if, I say, they proceeded on these principles, what is there so "strange" in their opposing the Baptists "for considering immersion as ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY?" Had they indeed *opposed* for merely *preferring* immersion in water to affusion or aspersion with water, their opposition would hardly be justifiable, except, perhaps, on this principle, viz., that it is wrong to differ from our more numerous brethren in the same country, neighbourhood, and religious sentiments, thereby occasioning endless scruples and dissensions, *without a Divine warrant.* But when the Baptists insist upon immersion as "*absolutely necessary* to a compliance with the Divine command," is it anything "*astonishing*" that those who *professedly maintain* the contrary should *oppose* it? Is it a "*wonderful phenomenon*" that they should possess so much courage as to *speak* and *publish* these things? If I allow that the primitive mode of public worship was without a prayer-book and pulpit notes, can I be candid or just in maintaining that my godly brethren who adopt this mode cannot be said to pray and preach, but what they think to be important duties are *mere nullities,* and always unacceptable to Christ, because not according to apostolic practice? I dare not say or think so. "When they *unite* in declaring their views of the apostolic pattern, they have clear, strong, indubitable *evidence*—each of them feels the ground on which he treads. Hence their *union;* and here they agree with us." But is it not equally evident that they "feel the ground on which they tread" when they *unite* with immovable firmness in testifying the *validity* of *different modes,* after all that has been said against them by their antagonists? If *union* be any proof in the present case, they all unite against the *necessity* of immersion for the essence of baptism. Pray, then, what do their *concessions* amount to? Not that they desert the *truth;* not that they act *inconsistently;* not that they are *imprudent* or *uncandid;* not that they are *bigoted* and narrow-minded; but that they consider the words as *generic terms,* admitting *diverse* modes; and that though the more common import of the terms, in *their* opinion, conveys the idea of immersion, yet in the sacramental sense, at least, they are to be understood with greater latitude.

"When our Divine Lord, addressing His disciples in a positive command, says, 'It *shall* be so;' or when speaking by an apostolic

example, He declares, 'It *is* thus;' all our own reasonings about fitness, expediency, or utility, must hide their impertinent heads." Very true; but *what shall* be so? or, *what is* thus? For the question is not about our Lord's *right* to command, and our *duty* to obey, but about His *meaning*. And again, the question is not whether the one mode be confessedly valid, but whether the other be invalid; which last we deny.

"It must, indeed, be acknowledged that though the numerous and learned authors just produced consider immersion as *generally* practised by the apostles, yet *many* of them think it highly probable that pouring or sprinkling was used on *some* occasions in those primitive times." Consequently, they must have considered the *legal force* of the word *baptism* as a *general* term, including *diverse modes* of application.

"That plunging, pouring, and sprinkling, are *three different* acts will not admit of a doubt. Or, does our Lord, in the same enacting term of the same law, warrant *all* those different modes?" The apostle Paul (Heb. ix. 10) expressly asserts, agreeable to what I plead for, that the Jewish *baptisms* were *different* or *diverse*. And this must be, not as plunging *differs* from plunging, but as purification by sprinkling differs from purification by pouring, &c. Nor do we hesitate to say, "that our Lord *warrants* plunging, pouring, and sprinkling," if He warrants *baptizing*.

"If pouring or sprinkling be *naturally* inferable from our Lord's command, and if the apostles or the primitive Church ever practised the one or the other, it is hard to imagine how they came to use immersion *at all;* either of the former, considered simply in itself, being more easy and more agreeable to human feelings, both in regard to the administrator and the candidate." What! needs Mr B. the information, that the human mind is ever prone to overrate the externals of religion; and that superstitious severities in external religious points have generally kept pace with the decline of vital piety? With what ease and force may the above argument be retorted by innumerable instances out of the Jewish and Christian histories? *More agreeable to human feelings!* Yes, we may easily see how much, or rather how little, persons under the charming influence of superstition consult their ease and delicate feelings, from the history of certain self-denying and *mortified* prophets, (1 Kings xviii. 28,) "who cut themselves after their manner with knives and lancets, till the blood gushed

out upon them;" from the account we have (Mark vii. 3, 4) of the "Pharisees and all the Jews;" for, "when they came from the market, except they *baptized*, they ate not." And Dr Gill, out of Maimonides, assures us, that, "if any man dips himself all over except the tip of his little finger, he is still in his uncleanness, according to them." And a little after he says:—"Scaliger, from the Jews, observes, that the *more superstitious* part of them, every day before they sat down to meat, *dipped* the whole body." Here we may observe, if these baptisms *were not* by immersion, the argument from the universal use of the term is given up; and if they *were* by immersion, as here asserted, Mr B.'s argument from *human feelings* falls irrecoverably. For it will not be presumed that these superstitious and troublesome ceremonies had any better origin than religious zeal exerting itself in will-worship. To which we may add: if there be any force in our author's argument in favour of immersion, it equally justifies *Popish mortifications!*

"If the credit of sprinkling cannot be supported without burlesquing the sacred history and exposing one of the most exalted human characters to the ridicule of infidels in this manner, it ought for ever to sink into oblivion." From this warm and strong language the reader may be led to think that something very impious and horrid has been imputed to John the Baptist. Nothing less; it is only Mr John Wesley's following note on Matt. iii. 6:—"It seems, therefore, that they stood in ranks on the edge of the river, and that John, passing along before them, cast water on their heads and faces; by which means he might baptize many thousands in a day." This, reader, is what Mr B. calls "a very fanciful and ludicrous representation;" and further adds, "While I wonder at that *fertility* of invention which appears in this note of the annotator, I cannot but detest the *puerile* and *farcical* turn which he has given to the conduct of our Lord's harbinger." *Burlesquing the sacred history! Exposing John to the ridicule of infidels!* Nay, let infidels themselves judge, as well as the impartial faithful, whether Mr B.'s hypothesis has not a greater tendency to burlesque the sacred history and excite ridicule. The one mode of purifying men and things was constantly practised in the Church of God, (Num. xix. 18,) "And a clean person shall take hyssop, and dip it in the water, and *sprinkle* it upon the tent, and upon all the vessels, and upon the *persons* that were there,"

&c. Of the other we have not one single instance of one person's dipping another in water, within the sacred annals of four thousand years. And *heathen* writers, to whom infidels are so partial, are not at all considered as debasing the dignity of heroic verse by a similar description. For instance, thus Virgil:—

> "Idem ter socios purâ circumtulit undâ
> *Spargens* rore levi et ramo felicis olivæ:
> *Lustravit*que *viros* dixitque novissima verba."
> —*Æn.*, vi., 229.

> "A verdant branch of olive in his hands,
> He moved around, and *purified the bands;*
> Slow as he pass'd, the lustral waters shed,
> Then closed the rites, and thrice invoked the dead."
> —*Pitt.*

I now venture to ask, which has the greatest tendency to excite the ridicule of infidels, the idea which Mr B. opposes with so much warmth, or his own hypothesis, which represents John as an amphibious animal, living so great a part of his time up to his middle in water?

That we may further see how little deserving of the "ridicule of infidels," and that of Mr B., is the circumstance of sprinkling alluded to in the above-mentioned note, I shall transcribe *another* note. It will, indeed, detract from the *fertility* of *that* annotator's *invention* to whom Mr B. ascribes it; and belongs to one who was never, I believe, charged with "burlesquing" the sacred Scriptures, by any writer living or dead, (Mr B. excepted,) or suspected, by any of his writings, to afford a just handle of ridicule to infidels. The author I mean is the *judicious* Dr Guyse. And his whole note, though somewhat long, very well deserves insertion in this place:—"I cannot think," says he, "that such prodigious numbers as came to John could be baptized in the way of immersing their whole bodies under water; or, that they were provided with change of raiment for it, which is nowhere intimated, nor seems to have been *practicable* for such vast multitudes; and yet they could not be baptized *naked* with modesty, nor in their wearing apparel with safety. *It seems, therefore, to me, that the people stood in ranks, near to, or just within, the edge of the river; and John, passing along before them, cast water upon their heads or faces with his hands, or some proper instrument, by which means he might easily baptize many thousands in a day.* And this way of pouring water upon them most naturally

signified Christ's baptizing them with the Holy Ghost and with fire, which John spoke of as prefigured by his baptizing with water, (ver. 11, and Mark i. 8, Luke iii. 16, John i. 33,) and which was eminently fulfilled when the Holy Ghost sat in the appearance of cloven tongues like fire; and this is expressly called '*baptizing* them with the Holy Ghost,' in opposition to John's 'baptizing with *water*,' and is spoken of as the Holy Ghost *coming upon* them, and as God's *pouring out* His Spirit, and *shedding* Him forth upon them, (Acts i. 5, 8, &c.) And with a direct reference hereunto, when the Holy Ghost *fell on* Cornelius and his friends, Peter said, 'Then remembered I the word of the Lord, how he said, John indeed baptized with water; but ye shall be *baptized with the Holy Ghost*,' (Acts xi. 15, 16.) The apostle Paul likewise, in a manifest allusion to baptism, speaks of God saving us by the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which He *shed on us* abundantly through Jesus Christ our Saviour, (Tit. iii. 5, 6.) Now, whether plunging the body into water, or pouring water upon it, was the likeliest emblem of this effusion of the Spirit, let the reader judge; especially since (*βαπτίζω*) the word constantly used for baptizing signifies *any sort of washing*, and often *sprinkling;* not being restrained to dipping, as its primitive (*βάπτω*) is, [which needed not be allowed;] but this last word is never used to express baptizing." * Reader, is there anything *puerile* or *farcical* in this language? Is it, in the eye of impartiality, unworthy of a grave divine, or judicious commentator? Now I will say, "If the credit of *immersion* cannot be supported without burlesquing the sacred history," by supposing the multitudes plunged over head, either *naked* or in their *wearing apparel*, and in the sight of all, "and exposing one of the most exalted human characters to the ridicule of infidels in this manner," by supposing him to be employed in purifying "Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the regions round about Jordan," up to his waist in water,—a work equally unnatural and unprecedented,—"it ought for ever to sink in oblivion." No; they are not the *infidels* who ridicule baptizing by affusion, but our *brethren* the Baptists!

Mr Matthew Henry had said:—"To baptize *naked*, or next to

* Note on Matt. iii. 6.; which he paraphrases thus:—"And they were so far affected with his doctrine that they made a public profession of repentance, and were baptized by him in the river Jordan, both he and they, according to the custom of the country, going a little way into the water, either barefoot or with sandals, for the greater convenience and expedition in baptizing them."

naked, (which is supposed, and generally practised in immersion,) is against the law of modesty: and to do such a thing in public solemn assemblies, is so far from being tolerable, that it is abominable to every chaste soul; and especially to baptize women in this manner."* At this Mr B. thinks the "reader has reason to be surprised, offended, shocked." I shall not attempt to vindicate the passage altogether; but does not Mr B. exceed in his censure? Will he venture to deny, that the candidates who were baptized by immersion, in the primitive Church, were immersed *naked?* The learned Bingham, after producing passages from Chrysostom, Cyril of Jerusalem, Leno Veronensis, Athanasius, &c., adds, "All which are manifest proofs that persons were baptized *naked*, either in imitation of Adam in Paradise, or our Saviour *upon the cross*, or to signify their putting off the body of sin, and the old man with his deeds. And this practice was then so *general*, that we find no exception made, either with respect to the tenderness of infants, or the *bashfulness of the female sex*, save only where the case of sickness or disability made it necessary to vary from the usual custom."† Will Mr B. say it is *required* by Divine law, that baptism be administered to persons as *naked* as Adam in Paradise? If not, here is another striking proof how much the joint influence of zeal and superstition consults *human feelings!* If it be said, that what was then *modest* is now *abominable*, it follows that local customs and national decency are not to be overlooked even in positive institutions. And in proportion as these ancient baptizers were blamable for leading the modest daughters of Eve to the sacred font in their *birth-day* habits, so far, at least, we have a proof that the ancient manner of baptizing is no model for modern times; and we further insist, in connexion with the foregoing pages, that the custom of plunging the subject was a matter of *mere choice and preference*, as well as the circumstance of *nakedness*, in distinction from any binding authority of the Lawgiver, or any absolute obligation on the administrator's part.

§ 46. *Fourth Coroll.*—From what has been said it also follows, that though the design of baptism were *more fully* expressed by immersion, than by pouring or sprinkling, yet would not immersion be proved *essential*, nor any way serviceable to the cause of our opponents.‡ But I absolutely deny the fact, that plunging

* Treatise on Baptism, pp. 138, 139; or, p. 1175, Sir J. B. Williams's Edition.

† Antiquities of the Christian Church, book xi., chap. xi., §§ 1, 2.

‡ See Pædobaptism Examined, chap. v., passim.

does more fully express the *design* of baptism, which is *principally* to represent the communication of Divine influences, as before shewn; and yet, were the contrary admitted, nothing more would follow, than that a preference is due to the immersing mode, while what is necessary and essential is not affected. Here I am stopped with an alarming question, "Is it commendable, is it justifiable, is it rational, that the professed followers of Jesus Christ should study to find out the exact boundaries of *essence* in a positive institution, that they may be able to determine with precision *how far* they may vary from the natural import of our Lord's command, &c., without entrenching on what is *essential* to the appointment?" To which I return this calm reply:—Yes, it is far more commendable, justifiable, and rational, that we should study the exact boundaries of *essence*, and pronounce accordingly, than rashly to pronounce *that*, of two modes, a *nullity*, *à priori*, without investigation, and *especially* in regard of a positive institution, from the mere presumptive plea that the one is comparatively *better* and *surer* than the other. For, surely, it must be palpably irrational to infer, that because one mode is not *so good* as another, therefore it is *good for nothing!* It is, undoubtedly, every one's duty and interest to serve Christ perfectly; but shall we therefore conclude, that no service is an act of obedience to Him but what is perfect? If one preaches the gospel *better* than another, does that imply the other does not preach it *well*, or even *at all?* If one baptizes by a *total* immersion, and another by a dipping *short* of that, is it justifiable to contend that the *latter* is no immersion? In like manner, if the scriptural baptism be *purification by water*, does it follow that to purify by water sprinkled or poured is no baptism? "Let candour, let common sense determine."

§ 47. Before we conclude this part of our subject, it may be proper to examine the force of Mr B.'s *seventh* chapter, "Concerning the Reasons, Rise, and Prevalence of Pouring, or Sprinkling, instead of Immersion."

Our author will have it that the practice he opposes "was introduced with the errors of Popery;" but with greater force of truth may we urge, that the *confining* of its essence, as well as mode, to total immersion, is genuinely Popish. Our practice, according to him, seems to have taken its rise "under the combined operation of different errors." On the contrary, we believe, and therefore speak, that the doctrine of the *essentiality of dipping*

was first planted by a Pharisaic hand, as an improvement on the original plan, and has been ever since watered by the hand of bigoted singularity. He further observes, that "*perfusion* was not thought *perfect, solemn*," &c. But what countenance can *his* cause derive from such considerations, except withal it was rejected as *absolutely null?* The case of Novatian, from Eusebius, is very partially represented by our author, as if the *whole* scruple about his baptism was owing to the *mode;* whereas nothing can be more evident than that the historian speaks of his baptism degradingly on *several other* accounts. "Now forwards I will orderly declare [says Cornelius, bishop of Rome, in a letter to Fabius, bishop of Antioch, preserved by Eusebius] by what means and by what trade of life he purchased unto himself the title of a bishop. Think you that it was because of his conversation in the Church from the beginning? or, because he endured many skirmishes and conflicts for HIS name? or, that he stood in manifold and great perils for PIETY'S sake? None of all these was true in him. The occasion of believing he took of Satan, which entered into him, and made there long abode. When he was delivered by the exorcists, he fell into a dangerous disease; and *because* he was *very like to die*, was baptized in the bed where he lay, if it may be termed a baptism which he received; *for* he obtained not after his recovery that which he should have done according unto the *canon* of the Church, to wit, *confirmation* by the hands of the bishop. Insomuch, then, as he obtained not *that*, how came he by the Holy Ghost?" Again:—"This *good man* (!) forsook the Church of God, wherein he was baptized, and where also he took priesthood upon him, though all the clergy, yea, and many of the laity, withstood it, because it was not lawful to admit into the clergy any that had been *baptized in bed* as he was." * It has been, moreover, observed of this heresiarch, that he had several defects in his person, which excluded him from the dignity of bishop, even supposing the election had not been schismatical; this, added to his having been a demoniac, exorcised by the Church, baptized while he lay sick and in *danger of dying*, and his never having been confirmed by the bishop, might be well deemed capital irregularities, as being totally repugnant to the ecclesiastical canons, independent on the *mode* of his baptism. Nay, the *principal* reason for objecting to the clinics being honoured with the clerical

* Eusebius, book vi., chap. 42. Lond., 1636.

office seems to have been the presumed imperfection of their Christianity, and the suspected light in which their *motives* for commencing Christians must have appeared, while they solicited baptism only in the face of apprehended death. Therefore, Valesius, on the above passage in Eusebius, might well say, "This baptism was thought imperfect, and not solemn for *several reasons*." And if "it was a formal and solemn question, made by Magnus to Cyprian, Whether they are to be esteemed right Christians who were only *sprinkled* with water, and not washed or dipped?" we may fairly refer the ground of the scruple to a want of conformity to the authoritative ecclesiastical rules, and the supposed more *perfect, solemn, self-denying* practice which then prevailed of having the candidates first stripped *naked*, whether men, women, or children, and then immersed *three times*. For all these particulars, according to them, were full of edifying mysteries. And by the *same rule* of interpretation that they maintained the being *buried with Christ by baptism*, and being *baptized into his death*, signified immersion, they also found that *putting off the body of the sins of the flesh*, (Col. ii. 11, 12,) denoted the delicate and instructive practice of *divesting* the candidates before their ghostly burial.

We are further told, "that this *clinic* baptism had no existence in the *apostolic* times." Nor any that I know of in these *present* times. It had no existence, if we consider "the erroneous foundation on which it rests, [the necessity of baptism for salvation,] and the total silence of the New Testament concerning it." We retort: that the *essentiality of dipping* had no existence in the apostolic times, we are led to conclude, by considering the erroneous foundation on which it rests, and the total silence of the New Testament concerning it. It is again pleaded, that the necessity of baptism has, in some instances, "operated so far as entirely to *exclude water* from any concern in the ordinance;" and so *may* the necessity of immersion, for our dispute is not about the *element*, but the *mode* of application. We hold, as well as our opponents, that water is essential to the Christian purification, because plainly asserted; and we equally discard the necessity of it to salvation; but yet maintain, that to exclude sprinkling or pouring as a nullity comes little short of the uncharitable rigour, and unwarrantable zeal, of those who hold that necessity. And it may be justly questioned whether the one has greater reason to make dipping necessary for bap-

tism than the other to make baptism itself necessary to salvation. "Nicephorus informs us," our author observes, "that a certain Jew was sprinkled thrice with *sand* instead of water." Is it not a wonder, then, if in those early times *immersion*, in allusion to our Lord's burial, was thought so *essential* to *baptism* that these zealots did not plead the necessity of his being *somehow buried*, if not in water? Might not the ill-informed and frightened convert (for he was suddenly seized with a dangerous illness) have been made to lie down in a hollow bed of sand, covered over with the same, and then be told, "Now you are buried with Christ in baptism, being hereby baptized into His death; for it is no matter how you come to this *state* of immersion, whether you are *put into* this substitute for water, or it is brought anyhow *over you?*"

"Our brethren who practise free communion," says Mr B., "frequently plead that these persons whose claim to the Holy Supper is under dispute consider themselves as *really* baptized, and on *that* ground should be admitted to the Lord's table. Query: Would they receive a candidate for communion who sincerely believes he has been baptized, merely because he has been sprinkled with *sand*, as in the case of this Jew?" An important query this, and highly complimental to his *brethren;* but it will be time enough to answer it when the querist condescends to inform us whether any case can occur, on the *plunging* plan, clogged with far greater difficulties? One would be induced to think at first that *his* hypothesis is subject to no embarrassment; but is not the *quality* of the element into which a subject is immersed liable to scruples far more difficult to be determined? And will not the *degree* of dipping often prove, on our opponents' principles, a puzzling point? "Such consider not with due attention the consequences of their opinion," says Mr Towgood, "nor observe how this *preciseness* as to ritual matters *naturally* genders strife, and ministers occasion to endless, contemptible, and foolish debates. For if overwhelming the person be of the essence of Christian baptism, hence obviously springs a doubt: What if the person, when lying beneath the water, should lift up a *hand*, so as to be *not quite covered* with the element; is the person, nevertheless, *truly baptized?* Or, suppose in the great hurry which such an operation may occasion, both the hands, or even the arms, should be so incautiously extended as not to be overwhelmed; I ask, is *that baptism good?* Or again, if through the bulk of the baptized, and the weakness of the baptizer, some

part even of the face or head should be uncovered; what is to be pronounced concerning such a baptism? Is it *valid* or not? Suppose the person whose hands, or part of whose face, was not quite overwhelmed, should be desired by the administrator to submit to a *second dipping*, because the first, being not *total*, he thinks not to be *sufficient*, and either himself or some attending friends should steadily refuse, alleging the defect to be not material, and the baptism was valid; would there not arise a very important *debate*, perhaps an actual *separation* or *rent* in that church? Some insisting that the person be received to full communion as a *truly baptized brother;* others strenuously opposing, and refusing communion with him as not being baptized, because not *totally overwhelmed*. How much to the edification and honour of the Christian world would such a contest appear! What matter of *ridicule* would it furnish to unbelievers! And how naturally draw contempt, not upon baptism only, as a solemn trifle, but upon Christianity itself, as ministering occasion to such *frivolous* debates! And yet, really, to this issue does the making immersion *essential* to Christian baptism *naturally* and directly tend. If it does not *in fact* gender such debates, it is because those who avow the principle do not follow it in all its consequences, nor closely adhere to it in every emergence of this kind. And if *washing the whole body* be of such moment in Christian baptism as our brethren represent, they ought, surely, to consider that the dipping a *clothed body* seems not a strictly just or adequate performance of it." *

§ 48. Mr B. on this occasion honours the reasons of his Pædobaptist brethren for pouring and sprinkling, by comparing them with the arguments of Roman Catholics, in defence of withholding the cup from the people. I hope our opponent will take it in good part if we return the compliment. Do the votaries of Rome, then, maintain that baptism is *imperfect* without the *chrism*, composed of two ingredients, oil and balsam; the one representing the human nature of Jesus Christ, the other His Divine nature? So do our Baptist friends deem the Christian purification by pouring or sprinkling water *imperfect*, and, which is more, *invalid*, except it be by the specific mode of immersion. Is it required of every *true Catholic* that he acknowledge the supremacy of the Pope, and that salvation is *confined* to the holy Roman Church? In

* Towgood's Dipping not the only Scriptural and Primitive Manner of Baptizing, pp. 31, 32.

like manner, on the principles I oppose, no one should be deemed a-*baptized Christian*, who is not initiated by the distinguishing mode of a sect; nor admitted,—however solemn his profession of impartial inquiry, however unexceptionable his religious sentiments in *every other* respect, however ornamental his conduct, devout his temper, useful his labours,—nor admitted, I say, into *Christian fellowship* for the purpose of commemorating the dying love of their common Lord and Saviour. Does the same intolerant Church hold the necessity of *episcopal* ordination for the *validity* of ministerial acts? So do the rigid votaries of plunging hold the necessity of a *dipping* purification for the *validity* of a true Christian church-membership. Do the *former* contend, that so plain a thing as common *bread* is insufficient for the eucharist? So do the *latter*, that no *washing of water, with the word*, is valid, but that which is precisely in *their distinguishing way*. Do Protestants urge on Catholics the necessity of *strictly* adhering to the original institution of the Supper? So do we on the Baptists, who *impose* what the Institutor has left free, and unwarrantably screw the initiating rite in the vice of bigotry, in defiance of those limitations to which alone the original institution obliges.

It is further added:—"Supposing an equal degree of benefit resulting from each mode of administration, yet there is not, there cannot be, the same degree of *humble obedience* to Jesus Christ." An argument this worthy of the *painful* pilgrims to Jerusalem and Rome! But again:—"The practice of *aspersion* is calculated to embarrass Protestants in their disputes with Papists; and Nonconformists in their controversies with Episcopalians." Not at all; but the very reverse is true: the practice of our opponents is calculated to embarrass them in their disputes with Papists and Episcopalians; inasmuch as they *impose as necessary* what the Divine Legislator has left *indifferent*. Moreover:—"Supposing there were both *difficulty* and *danger* attending the performance of our Lord's positive commands, we must submit without repining and without hesitation." True; so did Abraham. But we deny that to baptize *only by dipping* is a positive command; and, therefore, to submit to difficulty and danger, when *not required*, is no better than will-worship and voluntary humility unprescribed. "Circumcision was dangerous, yet not to be dispensed with." Right; for *that* was made necessary by a plain command, but no dangerous mode of baptizing is enjoined. Quotations also from

Charnock, Secker, Towgood, Owen, Saurin, Chardin, Maimonides, R. Nathan, Calvin, F. Fabricius, &c., are to no purpose; not affecting the point in dispute. Once more; our author talks of our "*altering* a positive appointment." But we think that this *alteration-work* is rather chargeable on those who claim a power to *annul* what our Lord Himself has ordained, as we believe *our* baptism is.

We are next impeached for "dispensing with Divine laws, or mitigating their severity." Let us be shewn what is Divine law, and we obey; but we reckon the *essentiality of dipping* not as the meaning of Divine law, but the offspring of Pharisaic zeal. As to the hint that our practice proceeds on the principles of "Spare thyself;" we may ask, Should not *we* spare where God does? If not, we can do nothing better than cut or scourge ourselves, or crucify one another! Finally; it is urged that "dipping was in use for thirteen hundred years,"—*i.e.*, through the darkest times of Popery! What a mighty recommendation! But that it was the *exclusive* mode, at least, in the apostolic age is neither granted nor admitted that it can be proved.

§ 49. The genuine reasons, rise, and prevalence of *immersion* in baptism, in my apprehension, may probably appear from the following remarks:—

(1.) The word *baptize* being a general term, denoting, in a ceremonial sense, *to purify*, it is probable that different modes of ablution were used, even in the apostolic age, according to circumstances. Sometimes the *whole body* might be *washed with pure water;* sometimes *washed* in a more *partial* manner, as Paul and Silas were *washed* (ἔλουσεν) on another occasion, and probably thus the jailer was, &c., when *baptized*, (Acts xvi. 33;) sometimes the water might be *shed* more *abundantly* on them while standing in a river or any other convenient place. But if at any time, so early as the apostolic age, the subject was led unto such a depth of water as might be necessary for immersion, and was actually immersed, (which yet remains to be proved,) still the stress was laid on the *ablution*, and not the *mode* of it. "Arise, and be *purified*, and *wash away* thy sins," (Acts xxii. 16.)

(2.) After a while Paul's words (Rom. vi. 3–6 and Col. ii. 11) began to be perverted in favour of *immersion;* as if this were countenanced by him allusively, and without considering that the same inspired writer alludes to *sprinkling, pouring, shedding.*

The following thought might appear very plausible:—"If the Christian purification be a *cleansing*, the more general and *complete* the better; therefore, a total washing, and even the putting of the subject under water, must be *more complete* and expressive." But however plausible this may seem, it is built upon a *fallacy*, —viz., that there is a *natural* beyond an *instituted* connexion between ablution and the thing signified. But were this fallacious fancy pursued to its just consequences, where could we stop? Shall we not be in danger of charging the ancient Divine ablutions with a defect of symbolic fitness, and of placing the excellency of the rite in "washing away the filth of the flesh?" or, perhaps, of commencing Hemerobaptists, &c.? Having made this proficiency, that a *total* ablution is a *more perfect* resemblance of the *moral* cleansing signified, and that this might best be effected by dipping, which moreover was *twice* alluded to by St Paul, it was easy to advance—

(3.) To another improving thought—viz., That as Christians were under the strongest obligations to cultivate *universal* and *complete* purity, it was beneath their high calling not to equal, if not surpass, the zealous Jews, or any others who used ablution as a symbol of moral purity. And it appears to me most probable that this superstitious emulation about the *completeness* of their ablutions gave rise to the great stress laid upon immersion among the Jews and primitive Christians. The *former*, with our opponents, made a *total* immersion *essential*, (for if a finger's end was not immersed, the rite was not valid;) and the *latter*, soon after the apostolic age, from the same emulous motive, fostered by a well-meaning, but injudicious zeal for purity, gave it the sanction of *general custom*, though not *absolutely necessary*, as appears from the records of those times.

(4.) In the primitive times numbers flocked into the Church from the polluted embraces of heathenism; it is, therefore, very conceivable that many would urge a *total ablution*, and for greater certainty, the *plunging* of the convert, that no part—no, not a finger's end—might remain contaminated with their former idolatry. And, surely, if the baptismal water was ὕδως ζωῆς, the *water of life*, as Justin Martyr expresses it, it was but charitable to make use of it copiously, and to apply it to every part. Hence—

(5.) From the same principle, joined with that of zeal for superstitious self-denial and mortification in unprescribed ceremonies,

arose the practice of baptizing *naked;* for how could *perfect purity,* the *new birth,* &c., be fully represented without it?

(6.) Accordingly, dipping continued during those ages when, and because, externals made nearly the whole of religion; and still continues in the Greek Church, there is reason to fear, from a similar cause.

(7.) Rome, indeed, at length, though abundantly superstitious in other respects, began to relax this line of bigotry long before the Reformation. And whether an attempt to establish the doctrine of *dipping,* as ESSENTIAL to Christian baptism, be not an attempt to re-establish and to improve upon what was worthy of the darkest ages of the Church, I leave to be considered by them whom it concerns.

(8.) At the Reformation from Popery, when the doctrines of the sacraments were minutely and rigidly examined, the honoured champions, who appeared on that occasion with undaunted courage in the cause of liberty and of truth, were so far from charging the gradual alteration that had been introduced in the churches of France, Italy, Germany, and others, as to the mode of baptism, as heretical and invalidating, that, on the contrary, they gave it the justest tribute of acknowledgment, as a prior part of reformation, by embracing it themselves.

But how little weight there is in the above considerations, as the ancient most plausible reasons for the essentiality of immersion, and in what is pleaded by our opponents from the force of the word *baptism,* &c., is now submitted to the impartial public.

CHAPTER V.

CONTAINING ANSWERS TO THE MOST CAPITAL *OBJECTIONS* AND *EVASIONS* OF ANTIPÆDOBAPTISTS.

§ 1. Objection, (First,) That the conduct of Protestants, in their management of the Popish controversy, is inimical to Pædobaptism—answered. § 2. (Second,) That there is no express precept or precedent in the New Testament for Pædobaptism—answered. § 3–6. (Third,) That there is no evidence of Pædobaptism before the latter end of the second, or the beginning of the third century—answered. § 7. (Fourth,) The grounds of Pædobaptism as practised by the ancients—answered. § 8. (Fifth,) The disagreement of the moderns concerning the grounds of Pædobaptism—answered. § 9–12. (Sixth,) If infants have a right to baptism, they must have a right to the Sacred Supper—answered. § 13. (Seventh,) If baptism seals only a bare exhibition of spiritual blessings, what benefit can that be to infants?—answered. § 14. (Eighth,) If there be a suitableness in infants, as such, to the institution of baptism, by what rule shall we determine what children to baptize, and what not?—answered. § 15. (Ninth,) If we baptize all our infants, then we shall have no adults to baptize—answered.

§ 1. It has been often objected, and has been particularly urged by Mr B., in effect—

First, "That the conduct of Protestants in their management of the Popish controversy is inimical to Pædobaptism, because they have always justified their renunciation of those objectionable particulars that the Romish hierarchy obtrudes upon its vassals, for want of Scripture authority for them; while the Antipædobaptists, in their turn, justify their conduct on the same principle." * And, indeed, this seems one of the most popular and plausible objections they ever urge; but there is neither truth nor fairness in the supposed parallel, for—

(1.) When anything is urged by Papists or others as necessary to salvation, or an indispensable term of Christian communion, which the inspired volume neither expressly asserts nor plainly

* Pædobaptism Examined, pp. 145–154, 174–178, 214–217, 310, 473.

supposes; what is there more reasonable or proper than a demand of their warrant for such conduct and sentiments. But—

(2.) Do Pædobaptists maintain, or do their principles or practice imply, that a being baptized in infancy, rather than when adult, is a necessary qualification for Christian communion? It is too well known to need explanation, that we regard *infant baptism* and *adult baptism*, not as two ordinances of a different nature, but as one and the same, differing only in the circumstance of *time*. We lay no stress on the time *when* as a necessary ingredient of valid baptism; and, therefore, let a person be baptized at fourscore, and we admit him to fellowship (*cæt. par.*) with the same readiness as if baptized in infancy. With what candour or fairness, then, are Pædobaptists compared with Papists?

(3.) We cannot help regarding the invidious comparison as totally inapplicable on another account—viz., because it proceeds on a supposition that Divine revelation gives no more countenance to the baptizing of infants than to the farrago of Popish will-worship. When we reflect on the godly and learned labours of Pædobaptist worthies, in pleading the cause of infants, and exposing the superstitions of Rome, we are grieved, we are painfully wounded, to find their *practical judgment* treated in so uncandid and severe a manner. Must we regard their tears of joy and gratitude, which, as parents and ministers, they have copiously shed, while in this ordinance devoting their infant children to Jehovah, mingled with the tears of enthusiastic devotees, whose passions are excited by mere superstitious ignorance? *Judge nothing before the time.*

(4.) Protestants and Protestant Dissenters forcibly object to the Church of Rome, or any other, arrogating to itself a power, *jure divino*, to decree and *impose* rites and ceremonies for which it produces no authority from Scripture, the law of nature, or any other law, except that of ITS OWN SOVEREIGN WILL AND PLEASURE: whereas we, as Pædobaptists, appeal to the revealed nature and design of the institution; and for its *application* to our infant children, in common with ourselves, to the dictates of nature,—to every successive dispensation of true religion from Adam to Christ,—to the language of prophecy in reference to gospel times,—to New Testament passages,—and to the almost universal practice of the Christian Church. We insist, in short, that the baptizing of our children, being *suitable subjects* of the gospel dispensation, and of

baptism, its initiatory rite, not contravened by Scripture evidence, but rather *included* in the general commission, is a *reasonable service,* which is corroborated by many important topics. Therefore, we need not scruple to say, that when any man, or body of men, adhibit arguments of a *similar nature, and equally forcible as these,* in favour of Roman (or any other) rites and ceremonies, we stand engaged to approve, and with all submission to practise them.

§ 2. Second, Mr B. objects, and employs a whole chapter in supporting the objection, "That there is no express precept, or precedent, in the New Testament for Pædobaptism."* On this I would propose the following observations ; and—

(1.) This mode of objecting to our practice seems admirably calculated to confound two things that are perfectly distinct—viz., nominal and real differences. For the objection tends to lead the unwary to suppose, that the baptism of infants is *another* baptism than what the Antipædobaptists use ; whereas it is plain to any that properly distinguish between names and things, that if we baptize an infant, we do not use another ordinance differing essentially from adult baptism, as theirs is, but only differ in judgment respecting the *qualifications* of the subjects. We should therefore be no more led away by such insinuations, than we should by being told that the baptisms of *believers,* of *hypocrites,* of *deaf,* and of *dumb* persons, were all of them *essentially different* from one another ; or by being told that the circumcisions of adults and infants, of Israelites and proselytes, were institutions of a quite different nature.

(2.) If *precepts* and *precedents* are to be interpreted by the most proper rules, nay, the *only* rules which the case fairly admits, we insist that the New Testament contains both precepts and precedents in our favour. These rules we say are, not the bare letter or mere expression of Scripture, but these in connexion with prior *Divine statutes* and *dispensations.* If, with these rules in mind, we attend to the revealed account of the nature and manifest design of the ordinance, we can no more, in equity, interpret the precepts and precedents relative to it to the exclusion of infants, than we can interpret a general invitation from a sovereign addressed to his subjects, importing a desire that they should quit their native soil on terms infinitely advantageous, while himself

* Pædobaptism Examined, chap. viii., passim.

leads the way, to the exclusion of their wives and infant children. Is it reasonable, is it scriptural, is it consistent with common sense, or was it ever instanced from the birth of time, that the child was justly debarred from any of the parents' privileges of which it was a capable subject? This being the case, ALL precepts and precedents are to be interpreted on supposition that this is an established and well-authenticated fact, which is not to be given up but by the most unequivocal contravention. Therefore—

(3.) We retort, and more consistently plead, that our opponents have neither *precept* nor *precedent* for THEIR conduct. They exclude where the *law* does not exclude, and where neither right reason nor common sense require it.

"That the sacred writings are our *only* rule of doctrine and worship, was the grand principle of the Reformation. *The Bible only is the religion of Protestants.*" True; the Bible *only*, in opposition to the Bible *and tradition*, but not in opposition to *natural dictates* uncontrolled by revelation. Our only rule of *doctrine and worship;* that is, such doctrine and worship as can be urged on men's consciences must not *contradict* this rule, but be *countenanced* by it. A *rule;* not absolutely and extensively in every punctilio and circumstance, but positively and correctively, as far as it goes. If nothing is to be considered as the *will* of Christ, even in religious worship, but what is expressly and circumstantially described, then our opponents must feel, equally feel, the embarrassment with ourselves, not only in other matters, but also in the present controversy. The perpetual cry, therefore, about Scripture express precepts and precedents as alone decisive in the debate, is of little moment with impartial inquirers after truth, till it is previously determined that the Scriptures were *designed* by the Fountain of all truth as our *only* guide, absolutely and extensively, in this matter. "The Holy Scriptures," as the judicious Hooker well observes, "are *all-sufficient unto that end for which they were given.* Therefore, accordingly, we do receive them; we do not think that in them God hath omitted anything needful unto His purpose, and left His intent to be accomplished by our devisings. What the Scripture *purposeth*, the same in all points it doth perform. Howbeit, that here we swerve not in judgment, one thing especially we must observe—namely, that the absolute perfection of Scripture is seen by relation unto that end whereunto it tendeth." And elsewhere he says:—"St Augustine was resolute

in points of Christianity to credit none, how godly and learned soever they were, unless he confirmed his sentence by the Scriptures, *or by some reason not contrary to them.* Let them therefore, with St Augustine, reject and condemn that which is not grounded either on the Scripture, or on some reason not contrary to Scripture, and we are ready to give them our hands in token of friendly consent with them."*

But other *fathers*, we are given to understand, are peremptory; as Basil:—"It is a manifest mistake in regard of faith, and a clear evidence of pride, either to *reject* any of those things which the Scripture contains, or to introduce anything that is not written in the sacred page." Ambrose:—"Where the Scripture is *silent*, who shall *speak?*" Tertullian:—"The Scripture *forbids* what it does not *mention.*" But these and similar maxims must either be taken with *limitation*, or else must stand convicted of inconclusive weakness. "To urge anything upon the Church, requiring thereunto that religious assent of Christian belief wherewith the words of the holy prophets are received,—to urge anything as part of that supernatural and celestially-revealed truth which God hath taught, and not to shew it in Scripture; this did the ancient fathers evermore think unlawful, impious, execrable. And thus as their speeches were meant, so by us they must be *restrained.*" †

It is further urged, that "the *silence* of Scripture is a sufficient ground of rejecting the *sign of the cross, exorcism*, &c., because those things, *not being written* in the sacred volume, are therefore *condemned.*" Granted; for, being supported by no antecedent principle of reason, and not enjoined by positive authority, they are condemned deservedly. But the *silence* of Scripture is not the *formal ground* of rejecting them, for it is silent about many other things confessedly right; but rather because not recommended by *any law* whatever, either natural or revealed. And when anything is urged as necessary which has no just pretensions for such necessity but Scripture evidence, then the silence of Scripture concludes against it, being indeed, on the supposition, the only remaining rule whereby its pretensions can be tried.

Our author is very fond of introducing Dr Owen among those who, he supposes, condemn themselves. For the Doctor had said:—"When once a person maintains it allowable to pass over the limits of the *Divine command*, there is nothing to hinder him

* Eccles. Polit., book ii., § 8, 4. † Ibid., § 5.

from running the most extravagant lengths."* And again:—"All worship is obedience, obedience respects authority, and authority exerts itself in commands. It is the authority of God alone that can make any worship to be *religious*, or the performance of it to be an act of obedience to *Him*."† One might be led to think from Mr B.'s manner of introducing these quotations, that the celebrated Dr Owen has deserted the cause of Pædobaptism, if it be but granted withal that the same cause is not *expressly* countenanced, and incontrovertibly enjoined in holy writ. But let the reader observe that the following remarks are contained under the very *same head* of discourse:—"The command of God is the ground and reason of all religious worship. Now, the command of God is twofold, *formal* and *vocal*—*real* and *interpretative;* consisting in an impression of the mind and will of God upon the *nature* of His creatures, with respect unto that obedience which their state, condition, and dependence on Him requireth. The *very nature* of an intellectual creature made for the glory of God, and placed in a *moral* dependence upon Him, and subjection unto Him, hath in it the force of a *command*, as to the worship and service that God requireth at their hands."‡ Therefore, on supposition that nothing short of a *command* can authorise a religious action, the Doctor is clear that commands are not only *formal* and *vocal*, but also *real* and *interpretative*. The former sort of commands is founded on the insufficiency of information which man possesses prior to their being enacted, *as to those particulars enjoined;* the latter sort continues of equal force with the other, *as far as the information goes.*

The Pædobaptists are classed by Mr B. with Fisher the Jesuit in their conclusions, who, when vindicating the worship of images, says:—"In the Scripture there is no *express* practice nor precept of worshipping the image of Christ; yet there be principles which, the light of nature supposed, convince adoration to be lawful." But this we overturn *two ways* most effectually, without being beholden to Mr B.'s fallacious mode of arguing from the *silence* of Scripture, as if it were a rule of undistinguished and universal application. First, positive interdictions are directly opposed to it, (Exod. xx. &c.;) and, secondly, the principles of right reason give it no countenance, nay, rather, from the same principles

* Theologoumena, lib. v., cap. xv., § 2. † Exposition on Hebrews, chap. i. 6.
‡ Ibid., p. 98.

image-worship is demonstrably absurd. How far the assertion, "that there is no express precept," &c., is consistent with *truth*, the reader may judge from perusing Chap. III., §§ 36–54.

§ 3. Third, It is again objected, "That there is no evidence of Pædobaptism before the latter end of the *second*, or the beginning of the *third* century."* To which I reply—

(1.) If it be the *will of Christ* to baptize infants, which I think has been demonstrated, the supposed silence of antiquity is of little moment.

(2.) The very objection, as stated by Mr B. himself, implies, that, "towards the latter end of the *second*, or the beginning of the *third century*,"—*i.e.*, about one hundred years after the death of the apostle John,—Pædobaptism incontestably existed.

(3.) The comparative silence of near a century after the apostolic age, by no means implies that the practice of baptizing children was not then in use. If the practice be a part of Christian duty, as we maintain, it is more charitable to suppose they *did* adhere to it than the contrary, where we are not determined by positive evidence either way. And—

(4.) Supposing it was actually opposed by some soon after the apostolic age, (which does not yet appear,) even this, of itself, would no more prove it wrong than the oppositions made to other now acknowledged truths proved them so.

(5.) To which I may add in the language of Mr Towgood :—"If any think it strange that we have *no more* express testimonies to this practice of the Church in the writings of these fathers, let him consider that the far greater part of their writings are lost, and that it is little more than their names and a few pieces of their works, especially as to the *first* age, that are transmitted down to us; and also [probably] that the baptism of infants being then *universally practised*, and no doubts or dispute having ever been moved about it; and it being likewise the constant, ever-prevailing custom of all the enemies of Christianity, both *Jews* and *pagans*, to admit *infants* to a participation of their *religious ceremonies and rites together with their parents*. These things considered, it will not appear strange that this point is so *rarely* touched on in the writings of those times. There are a thousand religious books written in the *present age*, in which the

* See Pædobaptism Examined, chap. ix., passim.

least hint is not to be found about baptizing of infants, though the point has now been so long and so warmly controverted amongst us; much less, then, should one expect to find anything but a few allusions and hints as to this matter in the books of those early times." *

§ 4. The first authorities produced by Mr B. to support his position are Salmasius and Suicerus, who assert, that "in the *two first* centuries no one was baptized except, being instructed in the faith, and acquainted with the doctrine of Christ, he was able to profess himself a believer; because of those words, 'He that believeth and is baptized.'" But to confront their authority, let the following observations of the learned Mr Bingham, whose researches into ecclesiastical antiquities are well known to be very great, be well considered:—"Infants were of two sorts, either such as were born of Christian parents, or such as were born of heathens, but by some providential means became the possession and property, as I may call it, of the Christian Church: neither of which sort were excluded from baptism, when sufficient sponsors could be provided for them. This is so evident from the ancient records of the Church, that it is to be wondered how some learned persons could run into the contrary opinion, and offer reasons from *antiquity* in prejudice of the Church's constant practice. Mr Wall, in his elaborate 'Discourse of Infant Baptism,' has justly reflected upon abundance of these men who by their unwary concessions have given too great advantage to the Anabaptists of this age. There are some others also, which he had not seen, who advance as unworthy notions of the ancient practice; for Salmasius, and Suicerus out of him, (Thesaur. Eccles., tom. ii., p. 1136,) deliver it as authentic history, that for the two first ages no one received baptism who was not first instructed in the faith and doctrine of Christ, so as to be able to answer for himself, that he *believed*, because of those words, 'He that believeth and is baptized.' Which in effect is to say, that no infant for the two first ages was ever admitted to Christian baptism. But afterwards they own Pædobaptism came in, upon the opinion that baptism was necessary to salvation. Now I shall not think myself obliged to be very prolix in refuting this opinion, together with the *false supposition* which is made the foundation of it, since that has so often and so sub-

* The Baptism of Infants a Reasonable Service, pp. 31, 32.

stantially been done by Vossius,* Dr Forbes,† Dr Hammond,‡ Mr Walker, § and especially Mr Wall, ‖ who has exactly considered the testimony and authority of almost every ancient writer that has said anything upon this subject. In all ordinary cases, where water-baptism might be had, they [the most ancient fathers] concluded as generally for the *necessity* of it, from that assertion of our Saviour, 'Except one be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.' This was not only a doctrine of the third or fourth ages, as Salmasius and Suicerus represent, but the doctrine of the *very first* ages, immediately succeeding the apostles. For we see Hermes Pastor, [lib. i., vis. iii., cap. 3; lib. iii., simil. ix., n. 16,] who lived in the apostolical age, founds the general necessity of baptism upon that very saying of our Saviour. And, therefore, they who represent this doctrine of the necessity of baptism as a novelty or an error first introduced into the Church in the age of St Augustine against the Pelagian heretics, do manifest wrong both to the doctrine itself, and to St Augustine, and to the ancients, who embraced and delivered the same before him. And it gives an *unnecessary* advantage to the Antipædobaptists, which a *right understanding* of this matter absolutely takes from them. I thought it, therefore, of some use to observe this against Salmasius and Suicerus, and to add it to the observations which Mr Wall has made upon Hermes Pastor." ¶

It is well known to the learned that Justin Martyr wrote and flourished soon after the apostolic age, for his conversion happened about the sixteenth year of Trajan, that is, A.D. 132; that the Apology which he presented to Antoninus Pius and the young Cæsars, being the *first* he wrote, was composed about A.D. 150; and that he suffered martyrdom about the second year of Marcus Antoninus, A.D. 166, or, according to Baronius, A.D. 165. Now Justin plainly says, in the Apology just referred to, commonly called the second, although in reality it be the first, as Dupin observes, that there were in his time, "several men and women of sixty or seventy years old, *οἱ ἐκ παιδῶν ἐμαθητευθησαν τῷ Χριστῷ*, who from infants had been *discipled*, proselyted, or devoted to Christ." ** Here he uses the very word of the com-

* De Bapt., disp. xiv.
† Instruct. Hist. Theol., lib. x., cap. 5.
‡ Def. of Infant Bapt., chap. 4.
§ Plea for Infant Bapt., chap. xxvii., &c.
‖ Hist. of Inf. Bapt, part i., chap. i., &c.
¶ Bingham's Origin. Ecclesiast., book xi., cap. iv., §§ 5, 6.
** Justin, Apol., ii., p. 62.

mission, *μαθητεύω*, with which baptism is so strictly and inseparably connected: "Disciple all nations, baptizing them," (Matt. xxviii. 19.) Now if any were *discipled*, proselyted, or devoted to Christ (which we have shewn to be the legislative force of the word, Chap. III., §§ 45–47) from their *infancy*, *ἐκ παιδῶν*, they must have been *baptized* from their infancy likewise, according to the commission, and while some of the apostles were yet living.

The author of the *Recognitions*, who was contemporary with Justin Martyr, and supposed by some to be Bardesanes Syrus, speaks of the necessity of baptism thus:—"The weakness of the first nativity, which comes to you by man, is lopt off when you are (*regenerato ex aquâ*) regenerated of water, and renewed to God; and thus you may arrive at salvation, which otherwise is not attainable. For thus the true prophet [Jesus Christ] hath assured us with a solemn asseveration, saying, 'Verily, I say unto you, Except one be born again of water, he shall not enter the kingdom of heaven.'" * Now, since this author holds the necessity of baptism to purge away original sin, (we do not justify his *divinity*,) and for an entrance into the kingdom of heaven, is it not highly probable that he *in fact* baptized infants? Incontestable evidence and certainty *that he did* is not necessary; for the nature of the case only requires that, in connexion with all preceding accounts of *right* and *fact*, it was *more probable* infants were admitted to these apprehended blessings by baptism, than the contrary. And if it be *right* to baptize infants, charity constrains us to suppose that this matter of right was reduced to *fact*, if we are not prevented by some counter-proof.

"Here, then, we have another author within the compass of the two first ages, directly confronting that assertion of Salmasius and Suicerus—that the doctrine of the necessity of baptism to salvation was not the doctrine of the *two first ages*, but only an opinion taken up afterwards, upon which foundation the practice of infant baptism was introduced into the Church. For no one can, or ever did, declare himself plainer for the necessity of baptism to salvation than this author does, from the words of our Saviour Christ, which he interprets, as *all the ancients* both before and after him did, of the ordinary necessity of water-baptism to salvation. So that if infant baptism was founded, as Salmasius pleads, upon the opinion of the necessity of baptism to salvation,

* Recognit., lib. vi., n. 9. Ap. Coteler, tom. i., p. 551.

this author must be an assertor of infant baptism, because he was undeniably an assertor of the general necessity of baptism to salvation." *

Irenæus, who, according to Dr Cave and Mr Dodwell, was born about A.D. 97, while the apostle John was yet living, says:—"For Christ came to save all persons by Himself; all, I say, *qui per eum* RENASCUNTUR *in Deum*, who by Him are *regenerated* unto God, INFANTS, and little ones, and children, and youths, and elder persons." † Now what is meant by *renascuntur* we may learn from himself, when, in a parallel place, (lib. i., cap. 18,) he says, "*τοῦ βάπτισματος τῆς εἰς Θεον ἀναγεννησεως, baptism*, which is our *regeneration* unto God, or, the baptism of regeneration to God." And that Irenæus is not singular in calling baptism *regeneration*, nay, that all the ancients *commonly* do the same, Suicerus himself owns. ‡

Mr B. objects to this passage by observing:—"If these expressions, 'who by him are *regenerated* to God,' signify the same as being *baptized*, they convey the idea of our Lord *himself* baptizing persons of different ages; but this we know was far from being a fact, for 'Jesus himself baptized not,' (John iv. 2.)" But the author is not speaking of Christ's coming to save all persons who *per eum had been* baptized, but all *who are;* which puts Christ's bodily presence absolutely out of the question. Therefore, whether we understand by the word *renascuntur*, baptism, or a spiritual change, the phrase *per eum* is *equally* proper; the former being effected by His *grace*, the other by His *authority*. If Irenæus, therefore, intends by the passage what was *commonly* meant by the term in question in those early times, namely, baptism, as Mr Wall in his History, and in his Answer to Gale's Reflections, has abundantly proved, the meaning is, "Christ came to save *all*, infants, &c., who are, *through Him*, (His mediation, His name, in virtue of His authority,) *baptized,—i.e.*, separated to God by the Christian purification." But this "represents our Lord as coming into the world to save those only who are baptized; an imagination," adds Mr B., "which is abhorrent from truth, and ought not, without the clearest evidence, to be charged on the venerable ancient." In the first place, our present inquiry is not about *theological*, but *histo-*

* Bingham, ut supra, § 8. † Iren., lib. ii., cap. 39.
‡ Thesaur. Eccles., voce *ἀναγεννησίς*. See also Wall's History, and Answer to Gale.

rical truth. And if any one is disposed to support the credit of these "venerable ancients" by denying *plain facts*, (of which the writings of Hermes, Justin Martyr, the *Recognitions* of Bardesanes Syrus, Irenæus, Clemens Alexandrinus, Tertullian, Ambrose, Chrysostom, Gregory Nyssen, &c., are standing monuments,) let him, for me, indulge the fancy, and enjoy the profits. In short, Irenæus's *real* meaning appears to me to be this: That it was our Lord's avowed explicit design, by becoming incarnate, and going, *per omnem ætatem*, through the several stages of life, to make an *exhibitory grant* of salvation to *all* the baptized; that the salvation was *intended*, according to the tenor of its external dispensation, for ALL, infants, &c., devoted to God by baptism through Christ, and not for *some* only. He is not speaking of the internal *application* of salvation, (according to the hidden purpose of Heaven,) but of its external *exhibition;* not the *secret* things which belong unto the Lord, but those things which are *revealed*, that *belong to us and our children* for ever: that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners; that it is His *express* will and pleasure no one, set apart to God by the initiatory rite, should perish for want of a Saviour and *suitable means* of salvation; that Christ and His salvation are so far *designed* for them, that nothing but their *criminal rejection* of the merciful grant can deprive them of it. But for any to be made *willing* in the day of Christ's power,—to have the light of truth shining in the mind by the efficiency of Him who commanded the primitive natural light to shine out of darkness,—to be actually restored to the favour and image of God, and made happy with the enjoyment of His salvation, must be referred, not to the mere exercise of the justice and equity of moral government, but to the just and equitable exercise of sovereign grace. Without attending to this plain and necessary distinction, not only the writings of the fathers, but a great part of the Holy Scriptures, will be involved in obscurity and seeming contradictions.

Clemens Alexandrinus, who flourished towards the close of the second century, has these remarkable words:—"If any one be a fisherman, (*Ἀπόστολου μεμνησεται καὶ τῶν ἐξ ὕδατος ἀνασπωμενων παιδίων,*) let him think of an apostle, and the *children* taken out of the water." * On which passage, Gentianus Hervetus has this comment:—"If there be engraven in a seal-ring the picture of a

* Pædagog., lib. iii., cap. 11.

fisherman, [or rather, as Clement's own words are, 'If a fisherman will have an engraving on his seal,'] let him think of St Peter, whom Christ made a fisher of men; and of the *children* who, when baptized, are drawn out of a laver of water, as out of a fish-pond."* The father "is in *this chapter*," says Mr Wall, "giving direction to Christian men and women concerning the gravity and modesty to be used in their apparel and ornaments; and, among other things, speaks of the rings then usually worn on their fingers, and the seals engraven on them. He earnestly forbids all idolatrous and lascivious pictures or engravings, and advises to such as are innocent, modest, and useful; and says thus:—'Let your seal be a dove, or a fish, or a ship under sail, or a harp, as was that of Polycrates; or an anchor, which Seleucus made his choice.' 'And if any one be a fisherman,' &c. As the emblem of an anchor or of a ship under sail, used for the impress of a seal-ring, does suppose those things to be commonly seen, known, and used; so St Clement's advising the emblem of an *apostle baptizing an infant* to be used by the Christians in his time (which was but about *ninety years* after the apostles) for the sculpture of their seals, does suppose it commonly known by them that the apostles did perform that office."

This passage has not escaped Mr B.'s notice, and he takes no small pains to evade the force of it. But the sum total of what he says amounts only to this, that the term παιδίων is sometimes applied to *young converts* to Christianity as well as *infants;* which no one denies. But it should not be forgotten that, in this branch of our subject, we act on the *defensive,* and therefore that a *demonstration* of the negative is unnecessary; and if the balance of *probability* turns in our favour, our advantage is abundant. Whether the term παιδίων be "expressive of *young converts* to Christianity," or to *little children* literally, let the learned reader judge for himself. For my own part, I cannot help thinking but that the above comment of Gentianus Hervetus, in connexion with the express design of Clement in this *chapter*, is the *most probable* meaning, notwithstanding the united efforts of Mr B. and Barker to shew the contrary.

§ 5. As for Tertullian, who was cotemporary with Clement, Mr B. allows that he "speaks *expressly* of infant baptism." The following passage is found in his treatise *De Baptismo*, (cap.

* See Wall's Defence of Hist. Inf. Bap., Appendix, pp. 9, 10.

xviii. :)—"According to every person's *condition* and *disposition*, and even their *age*, the delay of baptism is *more useful;* but especially with regard to *little children*. For what necessity is there that the sponsors also should be brought to danger? Because either by death they may break their promises, or else may be deceived by a future wicked disposition. Our Lord indeed says, 'Do not forbid them to come unto me.' Therefore, *let them come*, provided they grow up; let them come, provided they learn; provided they are taught whither they come: let them be made Christians, provided they can know Christ. Why *does* this innocent age make haste to the *remission of sins?* [i.e., *baptism.*] In worldly affairs men act more cautiously than to entrust him with a Divine treasure to whom earthly substance is not entrusted. Let them know how to ask salvation, that you may appear to have given it to one that asketh. *For no less reason unmarried persons* (!) also should be delayed, who are exposed to temptation; as well virgins by reason of maturity, as widows by being destitute of a consort, until they either marry, or be confirmed in continence." From this passage Mr B. gathers that infant baptism "was then a *novel* practice, was just commencing, and approved by *very few,*" because Tertullian *opposes* it; "had it been otherwise," says he, "there is no *reason* to imagine that the celebrated African father would have treated it as he did." But that he had no *good reason* for so treating it, may appear from his own account, for it is the *like reason* with that which he urges for procrastinating the baptism of *unmarried women!* which Mr B., I presume, must esteem sufficiently whimsical and absurd. *A novel practice just commencing, approved by very few!* If this be a fair inference, we are authorised, from the same premises, to conclude, that "to baptize unmarried women, who are surrounded with temptations, as well virgins as widows, was a *novel practice, just commencing, approved by very few!*" The truth is, Tertullian entertained unscriptural and superstitious notions about the nature and importance of baptism, which made him add to the above passage the following words:—"They who understand the importance of baptism will rather be afraid to receive it, than to put it off." He thought that sin *after* baptism was something vastly different from sin *before* baptism, if at all pardonable. He admits the FACT that *little children* were baptized; and that *sponsors* undertook for them, (probably he refers to children of *heathen* parents come

to the possession of Christians, when he speaks of *sponsors;* and if so, that the advice of delaying baptism refers *only* to them,) but he does not attempt to shew that it was "a *novel practice, just commencing, approved by very few.*" With far greater propriety we may say, that his *futile mode of reasoning* on the subject, founded on superstition, (for which he was remarkable in many *other* respects, as his works testify,) was a "*novel practice, just commencing, and approved by very few.*"

"That this ancient writer," says Mr B., "had a high regard for traditional rites in the affairs of religion, is plain beyond a doubt, from what he says when professedly handling that very subject. His words, as given us by an eminent Pædobaptist, [Wall's Hist., part ii., chap. ix.,] are as follow:—'To begin with baptism: When we are taken up out of the water, we taste a mixture of milk and honey; and from that day we abstain a whole week from bathing ourselves, which otherwise we use every day. At every setting out, or entry on business; whenever we come in, or go out from any place; when we dress for a journey; when we go into a bath; when we go to meat; when the candles are brought in; when we lie down, or sit down, &c., whatever business we have, we make on our foreheads the sign of the cross. If you search in the Scriptures for any command for these and such like usages, you shall find none. Tradition will be urged to you, as the ground of them; custom as the confirmer of them; and our religion teaches to observe them.'" Next follows Mr B.'s very singular remark:—"Hence it appears," says he, "with *superior evidence* (!) that this ancient author considered infant baptism as a *novel* invention." How, in the name of logic, does this conclusion follow from the premises? He subjoins:—"As a practice, that was neither *enjoined* by Divine command, nor *warranted* by public examples, nor yet *recommended* by the poor pretence of tradition, nor even *countenanced* by prevailing custom." If you are dim-sighted, reader, have recourse to your glasses, and wipe them clean, and the conclusion, no doubt, will appear with *superior evidence.* Yes: because Tertullian does *not mention* infant baptism among the *unwritten* traditions and customs of the Church, therefore it was neither enjoined by Divine command, nor warranted by apostolic examples! But, since the Pædobaptists are fond of truth *without evidence,* it may be more pleasing to some of them to view the following *darker* conclusion:—viz., Inasmuch

as this ancient author *does not* dissuade from the practice of baptizing infants *because* it was a novel invention, it is incredible that it *was such;* for if he believed it to be an innovation, why does he not reject it upon that ground, which would have been, on the supposition, an essential topic of dissuasion? Moreover; his mentioning those words of our Lord, *Nolite illos prohibere ad me venire*, "Do not forbid them to come unto me," in the form of an *objection* against his advice to *defer* their baptism, strongly intimates, that the practice itself was wont to be urged, and thought valid, from those memorable and gracious words; and which Tertullian opposes with the same reason and success as the *disciples*, when they *forbade the little children to be brought to Christ.* For with equal propriety might they have expostulated with the prohibited children's parents:—"Let them come when they are grown up; let them come when they can learn; when they are taught whither it is they come; let them be made Christians, when they are capable of knowing Christ." That is a goodly mode of answering an objection which consists in *repeating* the very things objected to! Let not the children be brought *now*, say the disciples. Nay, "Suffer them to come, and forbid them not," says Christ. *Suffer them to come*, says the Catholic Church, on Christ's authority. *No*, says the African innovator, (except where there is danger of death.) *No*, say the Antipædobaptists, let not the children be brought *now*, but let them be *better qualified.* On the whole; if Mr B.'s account of the above celebrated passage be compared with the *original*, it will soon appear with what justice those acute critics, the Monthly Reviewers, pronounced it *"partial;"* and said that he "hath not presented the reader with the *whole*, nor the *exact* sense of the ancient father." And I flatter myself it will also appear, from the *present attempt*, that what they further add is equally just:—"When the *omission* is supplied, and a fair translation given, the passage will bear a *different aspect.*"*

Origen, who flourished in the beginning of the third century, has *various* passages that tend to illustrate and confirm the antiquity of infant baptism; "some of which passages," says Mr B., "it must be allowed, are plain and express to the point." A few here follow:—"What is the reason why the baptism of the Church, conferred for the remission of sins, is also administered to *infants?* Since, were there nothing in infants that required forgiveness and

* Monthly Review, vol. lxxi., p. 213.

mercy, the grace of baptism might seem superfluous."* And again:—"Infants are baptized for the remission of sins. Of what sins? Or when have they sinned? Or how, in the case of little children, can any reason of the laver [*i.e.*, baptism] hold good, except according to the sense before mentioned? No one is free from pollution, though his life upon earth were but the length of one day. And, because by the sacrament of baptism our native pollutions are put away, therefore it is that infants are baptized. For except a man be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven."† And elsewhere:—"The Church hath received the tradition from the apostles, that baptism ought to be administered to infants. For they to whom the Divine mysteries were committed know that there were in all those natural defilements which must be washed away by water and the Spirit."‡

To these striking testimonies Mr B. excepts:—"It ought, however, to be observed, that those quotations are made, not from the *Greek* of that celebrated father, but from such Latan versions of his works as are very corrupt, and consequently render it *quite uncertain* what was his opinion in reference to that affair." In answer to which, let the following remarks of Dr Wall suffice:—"If there were found in these translations of Origen but one or two places, and those in Rufinus alone, that did speak of infant baptism, there might have been suspicion of their being interpolations. But when there are so many of them, brought in on several occasions, in translations made by several men, who were of several parties, and enemies to one another, as St Hierom and Rufinus were, and upon no temptation, (for it is certain, that in their time there was no dispute about infant baptism,) that they should be *all* without any reason forged is *absurd* to think. Especially if we consider that these translators lived not much more than an hundred years after Origen's time; and the Christians then must know whether infants had been used to be baptized in Origen's time or not; the very tradition from father to son must have carried a memory of it for so short a time. And, then, for them to make Origen speak of a thing which all the world knew was not in use in his time, must have made them ridiculous. And besides; in the *Greek* remains, there are sentences and expressions so like

* Hom. viii. in Lev. † Hom. xiv. in Lev.

‡ Orig. Comment. in Rom., lib. v., cap. 6.

and parallel, that they do *confirm* these to be *genuine* translations." * To this I shall subjoin the following remark, as not *very foreign* to the subject:—"What Mr Booth says of Rufinus makes but little against the testimony of Origen; which, by the way, is not *confined* to those books that were translated by Rufinus. But, if there were interpolations, why must *those* passages be the interpolated ones? Where is the *mark* of their spurious birth?" † St Jerome, if his own plain testimony is to be credited, translated the Homilies on St Luke without alteration, and in a manner literally exact. But the passage already quoted from *this* part of Origen's works is *absolutely decisive;* that INFANTS, as well as adults, were admitted into the Church of Christ by BAPTISM in his time. And in proportion as Rufinus's translation is to be depended upon, it was the *apostles' practice,* and was continued in the Catholic Church by their *express order.* And we may venture to appeal to any dispassionate inquirer, and impartial judge upon the case, on supposition that this translator did take liberties in some points, whether it is not *highly improbable* that these liberties should be taken, by any man possessed of a few grains of common sense, in a *matter of fact,* of such *public notoriety?* In matters of mere *opinion* it is reasonable to suppose he might have indulged considerable freedom, such as about the *final punishment of the wicked,* &c., but suppose him as exceptionable a *translator* as Mr B. would have him,—nay, suppose him guilty of *interpolations* in some speculative points, still it is *utterly incredible* he should venture to interpolate where a *notorious fact* was concerned, and foist a falsehood into the works of Origen under the eye of Jerome, of whom he must have been jealous, and, indeed, in the face of the whole Christian world, without any apparent reason for so doing. He that can believe it, let him.

§ 6. As to Cyprian, who flourished about an *hundred and fifty years* after the apostles, his writings are so decisively clear and full to the point, that neither sophism, nor the fond love of hypothesis, have had the courage to dispute his verdict concerning the existence and wide extent of Pædobaptism. He, therefore, and the following fathers of the Church, are generally given up as *incontestable.* And since Mr B.'s *objection* does not extend to any of the Christian fathers subsequent to the time of Origen, (though, by the

* Wall's Defence. Appendix. p. 11; also, History. part i., chap. v., § 4, &c.
† Monthly Review, vol. lxxi., p. 214.

by, he died but about *four years* before Cyprian, the latter in A.D. 258, and the former about A.D. 254,) it is not necessary to produce their testimonies. Suffice it only to hint, for the sake of the less-informed reader of these pages, that St Cyprian gives us an account of a council held at Carthage A.D. 253, where SIXTY-SIX bishops were convened; that it was proposed to this venerable assembly, whether infants were to be kept from baptism till they were *eight days old*, as in the case of circumcision, or might be baptized *sooner?* Without one dissenting voice, a decretive answer was returned, that *no infant* is to be prohibited from the benefit of baptism, though but JUST BORN. Not the least demur appears to have been made about the lawfulness, duty, or propriety of *baptizing infants*, but about the *precise time* of it as a standing custom; which seems to have originated with the scrupulous Fidus, a country bishop, when thinking of the initiatory rite in the immediately preceding dispensation. About an *hundred and sixty* years after this council, a warm dispute took place about *original sin*, between St Augustine and Pelagius, which occasioned some remarkable declarations concerning the baptizing of infants, that otherwise might have never come to light. Pelagius was pushed hard by this question of Augustine, "Why are infants baptized for the remission of sins, if they have none?" The former is confounded; he knows not what to say. But instead of attempting to discard Pædobaptism as unscriptural, unapostolical, or an unwarrantable innovation, which he could not have failed to have done had it been in his power, he declares, "That he never had heard even any impious heretic who should assert that infants are not to be baptized." And again:—"Who can be so impious as to hinder infants from being baptized?" And Augustine scruples not to say, "That he did not remember to have ever read of any, not only in the *Catholic Church*, but even in any *heresy* or *schism* whatsoever, who maintained that baptism ought to be denied to infants. This the Church has *always* possessed, has *always* maintained." No, the bold innovator on the Catholic practice, Tertullian, did not hold that they were *incapable*, or even *unsuitable* subjects, so far as to render their baptism a *nullity*. He only advised to *delay* it, from the notion that sin after baptism was hardly pardonable, and that the sacred laver washed away all antecedent crimes.

Thus I think the *objection* is fairly solved: If Pædobaptism be

a matter of *right*, as before *proved*, it is both charitable and reasonable to conclude (*cæt. par.*) that the purest antiquity *practised* it; and as nothing but the clearest evidence to the contrary should make us alter this judgment, so every degree of *probability* that it was *in fact* observed, is proportionably an evidence, *ex abundanti*, over and above what is strictly necessary, in our favour.

§ 7. Fourth, Mr B. has a chapter on "The *high opinion* of the Fathers concerning the utility of Baptism, and the grounds on which they proceeded in administering that ordinance to infants, *when* Pædobaptism became the prevailing practice;" which may be considered as one of his capital *objections*. But as the main force of it (if force it has) is already weakened by what has been advanced in answer to the last objection, our reply may be the more concise.

Our author observes, that the earlier fathers had learned either to call baptism "*the water of life;* or had ascribed to it an *illuminating power*, and connected *adoption*, *perfection*, and *immortality* with it; or had pronounced it *a Divine blessing*, which ascertains the *abolition of sin*, and is attended with a *sanctifying energy*." I then ask, Is it reasonable to think, is it credible, is it not *absolutely incredible*, that Justin Martyr, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, and others, who used this language, did *actually* and out of *choice* suffer such children as were at their disposal to die unbaptized? The justness of their motive is now out of the question; we inquire after the *most probable* FACT. Besides, not influenced by our opponents' maxim, "that positive laws imply their negative," in reference to some parts of their Christian worship, what could restrain them from applying that to the *youngest of mankind* which they apprehended to be so salutary and requisite for ALL?

"The baptism of infants was introduced and prevailed, on the supposition of its being a *necessary* means of human happiness; and this weak surmise was founded on a mistake of our Lord's meaning in John iii. 5." It cannot be denied that "the ancient Christian Church, from the highest antiquity after the apostolic times," as Vitringa observes, "appears generally to have thought that baptism is *absolutely necessary* for ALL that would be saved by the grace of Jesus Christ;" * but I deny that Pædobaptism arose from that mistaken notion, and think it amounts to little short of de-

* Observ. Sac., tom. i., lib. ii., cap. vi., § 9.

monstration, that the Christian Church, "*from the highest antiquity,*" administered baptism to the *infant part* of the human race. But admitting this opinion to be a mistaken one, in defence of which John iii. 5 has been generally produced, a question of considerable moment arises—viz., How are we to account for so extraordinary a fact? How came these venerable ancients, immediately after the apostolic times, thus to agree in an interpretation of so interesting a part of holy writ, which is now exploded as indefensible and absurd? On Antipædobaptist principles, I believe this must appear an inexplicable paradox. However, towards accounting for this singular phenomenon in the Christian Church, I would submit to consideration the following remarks:—

(1.) If John the Baptist, our Lord, His disciples and apostles, did *actually* admit infants, and dependent children, along with their parents, to their baptisms, it is comparatively easy to account for the misinterpretation; for then it will be, at most, only assigning an *inadequate cause* to an *acknowledged fact.* That is to say, either one essential *reason why,* according to them, any under the gospel dispensation enter into the kingdom is, *because* they are baptized with water; or else, *one reason* of Pædobaptism is its *necessity* to salvation, according to John iii. 5. Supposing, then, that the primitive Christians were all Pædobaptists, they would probably thus reflect:—"We observe that all Christian families, and every member, both old and young, male and female, are devoted to Father, Son, and Spirit, by baptism; this is a standing *universal fact,* but what is the *principal cause* of it? For, though supported by *precept* and *precedent,* though enjoined by the *highest authority,* yet it must be founded on some important *reasons.* And seeing it is so *universally* administered, may we not infer that, among other reasons assignable for it, we are to consider it as a *necessary means of human happiness;* especially since our Lord says, 'Except one be born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven?'" On the other hand, supposing these ancients acted on Antipædobaptist principles, how shall we account for the *stubborn fact?* Would they not reason to this effect:—"We lay this down as a certain principle, because plainly asserted by our Lord, that without being *born of water,* that is, *baptized,* no one can enter into *heaven* under the present economy. Therefore, all our infant offspring, and children under age, who are summoned to eternity before they make a personal application

for the salutary baptismal rite, are inevitably—gloomy thought, horrid supposition!—are inevitably and eternally lost? Is this appointed by the God of Abraham? Is this authorised by the benevolent Jesus? Impossible." But should it be said, that Antipædobaptist principles have a direct tendency to prevent the interpretation in question; we reply, How, then, came it to be actually and so universally embraced immediately after the apostles' time? It is but the essence of folly to set up mere hypothesis against plain fact. Nor can it be said against my argument that Pædobaptism was the genuine parent, but the *innocent occasion*, of the erroneous sentiment in question; for we, as well as our opponents, discard and consistently explode the latter. The administration of baptism to infants as well as adults may afford the occasion, but is not the *real cause*, why it may be thought of universal necessity.

(2.) The exact leading idea in the controverted text appears to me to be this:—"*Something more* than *water-baptism* is necessary for the happy enjoyment of the spiritual blessings and glories of my kingdom; and that is, a *spiritual baptism*, or the renewing influences and effects of the Holy Spirit, which may be termed a supernatural birth." Let it be observed, that at this very time John's extraordinary *purification* must have made a great noise in Jerusalem, and what it *signified* must have been a common topic of conversation. It cannot also be reasonably doubted that Nicodemus wished to procure a *particular account* of those things about which men were so much divided in their opinions; for, as Dr Doddridge observes, "our Lord's answer intimates that He either expressly made, or secretly intended, such an inquiry; and it is impossible to enter into the beauty of this discourse without considering it in this view."* And, accordingly, this inquisitive Pharisee is given to understand that the much-talked-of *purification by water*, though divinely appointed and so universally administered, was *not sufficient* to constitute a subject of *His kingdom* in the spiritual and most sublime import of it. "Your being born within the pale of the Jewish Church," as if He had said, "constituted you formerly, and this *initiation by water* bespeaks you now, 'the children of the kingdom' in an *external sense;* but *superadded* to this, and infinitely more important is the consideration, you must be the renovated subject of Divine influences before you

* Fam. Expos. in loc., vol. i., § 25.

can enter as subjects of my *invisible kingdom*. Ceremonial observances may admit in the *former* sense, but sanctifying grace alone insures the *latter* privilege." The passage, therefore, is *elliptical:* "Unless a man be born *not only* of water, *but* ALSO of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." The former clause only implies, by way of *concession*, that water-baptism is very well in its place; but the emphasis of *necessity*, in regard of the higher and spiritual import of the term kingdom, belongs only to the latter clause, with which the other is not so much connected as *contrasted*.

Hence it appears that this ancient opinion is *easily* accounted for comparatively, if *they did* baptize their children in the apostolic age, by their supposing the *fact* of Pædobaptism to be in a great measure founded on the *necessity* of baptism to salvation, which was rather strengthened than generated by a misunderstanding of this elliptical passage. On the contrary, so early a prevalence of this notion, if they *did not* baptize their children, is incredible, and morally *impossible;* because connected with the most gloomy and horrid idea—*i. e.*, that *all* their buried infants were unavoidably lodged in endless woe! And hence it also appears, that what Mr B. has advanced as a plausible objection to Pædobaptism proves a strong argument in favour of its apostolical antiquity.

§ 8. Fifth, Another objection, of which Mr B. often avails himself, is, "The disagreement of the moderns concerning the grounds of Pædobaptism." In general, we reply, that the presumptive and probable reasons and grounds for the practice have been always thought so *numerous*, that it was difficult *out of many* to fix upon the *most* striking and solid. And this is a natural consequence, arising from the very *number* of the mediums of proof; for it is ever more difficult to choose one out of *many* things alike, than one out of a *few*. This also, in a good measure, accounts for the firmness with which the *conclusion* has been held by persons who have disagreed about the comparative importance of different arguments in this controversy. Each writer would be induced to magnify and extol an argument which appeared to him, viewed in certain *connexions*, with superior force; and then, by being disproportionately enamoured with the one convincing topic, might be tempted to discard all others as useless. Thus the famous Descartes, on a subject of more awful importance, when he discovered a peculiar force in the argument for the *existence of God* which is

founded on our IDEA of a *self-existent Being*, seemed to regard as useless all other demonstrations against Atheism. And yet this very argument, which he thought rendered all others unnecessary, was renounced by other writers on the same subject, as in its turn unnecessary also, while notwithstanding the *same conclusion* was firmly and properly held. But, more particularly—

(1.) Some have laid considerable stress on "*Jewish proselyte baptism.*" * But Mr B. says, "There is no appearance in the New Testament of this proselyte baptism, but strong presumptive proof to the contrary." Not to enter far into this inquiry, *How soon* did the proselyte baptism take place? I would only say, in the language of Dr Doddridge, who exactly expresses my thoughts, "It is strange to me that any should doubt whether proselytes were admitted into the Jewish Church by baptism, that is, by *washing*, when it is plain from express passages in the Jewish law, that no Jew, who had lived like a Gentile for one single day, could be restored to the communion of their Church without it. Compare Num. xix. 19, 20, and many other precepts relating to *ceremonial pollutions;* by which the Jews were rendered incapable of appearing before God in the tabernacle or temple till they were *washed*, either by *bathing* or *sprinkling.*" † And even Dr Gill allows that there were *baptisms* among the Jews for *ceremonial uncleanness*, and were particularly used in the case of such as had been newly proselyted from *heathenism* before they could eat of the passover. He then adds :—"Besides, this *baptism* was not on account of proselytism, but was *common* to, and obligatory upon a circumcised Israelite, in order to eat of the passover, as is acknowledged by all." ‡ And again :—"There were divers bathings, baptisms, incumbent on the Israelites, and so upon such proselytes who were upon an equal footing with them, and equally under obligation to obey the ceremonial law; which consisted of divers washings, baptisms; yet none of them for proselytism, but for *purification* from one uncleanness or another, in a ceremonial sense." § So, then, it is an acknowledged fact that *baptismal purification* was familiarly known to the Jews when John the Baptist made his appearance, and for many ages before. Should a doubt of this fact still remain, Dr Gale stands ready to remove it :—"That the Jews," says he, "on account of several kinds of pollution, used

* Pædobaptism Examined, chap. xi, § i., passim.
† Fam. Expos., vol. i., § 25.
‡ Body of Div., vol. iii., p. 478.
§ Ibid., p. 481.

to *purify* themselves by *washing*, cannot be questioned; the *diverse washings* [Gr., *baptisms*] mentioned in the Epistle to the Hebrews (chap. ix. 10) make it incontestable. And it is plain enough, that upon some such notion, they were washed after the sore of circumcision was healed."* Therefore it appears with superior evidence, from the testimony of these competent and unexceptionable witnesses, that baptism was well known as a ceremonial, purifying rite, prior to the Christian era; consequently, our Lord appointed a ceremony which was *in use before*, as a *seal* of the covenant to be applied to all who are *initiated* into His Church. Now it is evident that these two things were of long standing, and by Divine authority, among the Jews—viz., *proselytism* and *baptism*. But they were not *connected*, say our opponents; well, supposing they were not, (which yet admits of debate,) is it reasonable to conclude (*cæt. par.*) that infants are not to be admitted proselytes *because* the ceremony of initiation is *changed?* Infants were always admitted to the Church with their parents; and we insist that the ancient custom, as to the *subjects*, is neither *expressly* nor *virtually* altered in the New Testament, and therefore should be still admitted. The ceremony of admission into the Church is indeed altered by our Lord's positive authority—"Proselyte all nations, *baptizing* them;" and to *this* we *sincerely* submit. Nor let our opposing brethren, we entreat them, call our sincerity in question for their own sake, (Matt. vii. 1, 2.)

(2.) Others have strongly urged "*external covenant-relation*."† Mr B. takes great pains to shew how various and inconsistent are the accounts given us by different Pædobaptist authors; but he seems somewhat cautious how he denies the existence of an *external covenant*. No, we insist it is not in his power to deny, and to support the denial, that it does not exist. I think it would be no hard matter to shew, that such a covenant as may be properly called an *external* one, existing in the present day, is no less truly and demonstrably connected with the Old and New Testament, than Euclid's *Q. E. D.* is so connected with his theorem. "If," says our author, "we consider the offspring of believers as interested not in the *efficacy*, but in the *administration* of the covenant, where is that mighty difference between the state and prerogatives of *such* infants, and those of children in common, who are brought

* Reflections on Wall, p. 328.

† Pædobaptism Examined, chap. xi., § ii., passim.

up where the means of religious instruction are enjoyed?" We retort: Where is the *mighty difference* between baptized and unbaptized *adults*? And do we ever deny, that the children of Antipædobaptists are in the *administration* of the covenant? But this we are sorry to add, that they are *unjustly* deprived of the *seal* of that administration. "What *is* the external administration of the covenant, but the benign conduct of Providence, in affording a written revelation, a gospel ministry, and other means of spiritual information?" True, and consequently *baptism*. God's covenant to man, as before shewn at large, is a *grant* of mercy to him as a sinner deserving eternal woe. The grant, which baptism seals, is extensive as the gospel sound, on the part of God; but man's subjective, participated *interest* therein, must have its denomination, its kind and degree, according to the *reception* and *treatment* God's covenant grant meets with. A *spiritual* reception (effected by sovereign grace) insures a spiritual subjective, or actually participated interest. A *professional* reception insures an external interest. The nature and degree of the reception or treatment the grant meets with, infallibly ascertains the nature and degree of the *possession*. Now the things that are *revealed*, particularly God's covenant, and if the covenant, the seal annexed to it, belong to us and to our children for ever, (Deut. xxix. 29.) Our children as well as ourselves are the *objects* of this grant; their *passive* reception, or *non-resistance* of the exhibited mercy, shews they have not *forfeited* the grant; therefore, to deem the grant *theirs* is but right; to allow that the covenant *belongs*, or is directed to *them*, is but according to *truth*; and, therefore, it irrefragably follows, the *seal* is theirs. For the seal is given in confirmation of the promise, or *external grant*, and not the *internal possession* of covenant mercy. Consequently, a parent who takes the seal to himself, and withholds it from his child, who is equally an object of the grant and whatever confirms it, when no personal forfeiture is supposed, is guilty of *injustice*.

(3.) Some have pleaded in favour of Pædobaptism, "*Jewish circumcision*." * How far the topic of *circumcision* may be pertinently and conclusively pleaded in this debate, has been incidentally mentioned before, (Chap. II., §§ 32, 35; Chap. III., § 5, &c.;) nor does it now require many words. For thus much is self-evident, (and it is sufficient for my purpose.) that INFANTS, during

* Ibid., chap. xi., § iii., passim.

the long period from Abraham to Christ, were SUITABLE OBJECTS of a covenant grant; and CAPABLE SUBJECTS of a covenant seal. And I may add, the *grant sealed* was "the righteousness of faith," a *spiritual* blessing; no less spiritual than is now exhibited under the gospel, being, in fact, virtually the same as what Peter calls a *promise*, when he says, (Acts ii. 39,) "The promise is unto you, and to your children;" not *because* you repent, but as your *encouragement* to repent. The Lord proclaims Himself *our God*, and gives us His covenant and the seal of it, that we—being drawn by these cords of love, and condescension to human weakness, in a rational and suitable manner—might be induced to become *His people*. To this end is infant circumcision, and to this end is infant baptism, eminently subservient. To say that baptism is a succedaneum for, or comes in *the room* of circumcision, is, perhaps, an exceptionable way of stating the matter. But this we must maintain, that what circumcision eminently *sealed* under the *law*, baptism *seals* under the *gospel;* and this appears from a comparative view of Scripture testimonies concerning the nature and design of each.

§ 9. Sixth, It is again objected, "If infants have a right to baptism, they must have a right to the Sacred Supper; and if they are admitted to the former, they ought to be admitted to the latter, if we would preserve consistency."* That this is an objection of very great moment in Mr B.'s esteem appears not only from the frequent mention he makes of it in different parts of his publication, but also from his devoting a whole chapter to urge it. Therefore, a becoming respect for my opponent demands from me a particular examination of its force. Not to say that Dr Priestley has written professedly in favour of "giving the Lord's Supper to children," which may be deemed by some, independent of his *reasoning*, a mighty *argument* in favour of the practice, the following bold challenge is alone sufficient to justify a close and impartial inquiry into this matter:—"The tenor of his argumentation," says Mr B., when speaking of Mr Peirce's publication on the subject, "is such as may *safely challenge* the united efforts of our opposers fairly to confute it, without sapping the foundations of infant baptism. Nor, indeed, have I as yet heard of any professed answer that was ever attempted, though the *cause* of Pædobaptism seems to require it, and though the character of Mr

* See Pædobaptism Examined, chap. xii., passim.

Peirce, for learning and parts, may be justly considered as a motive to such an attempt. For as the learned author grafts infant communion on the principles of infant baptism, and in a masterly way insists upon it, that those principles infer the *former* as well as the *latter*, our opponents cannot be insensible that a thorough confutation of his Essay would be of great importance to their cause, when disputing with us. Were we to behold the Pædobaptist hypothesis fairly and entirely divorced from its old associate, *infant communion,—that* being confirmed, while *this* is confuted,—one great impediment would be removed out of the way of our commencing Pædobaptists. Now, to what an extent analogical reasoning and inferential proof may be pursued, in regard to positive institutions, and for the support of *error*, Mr Peirce has given us a striking instance,—such an instance that we *despair* of seeing his arguments *really* answered on any principles but those of a Baptist. If our opponents, however, be otherwise minded, we should be glad to see a trial of their strength, by labouring to confute him on the principles of Pædobaptism."* This challenge I accept on Pædobaptist principles. And the rather, because if I succeed in refuting the arguments of Mr Peirce, I shall by the same means answer the *objection* of Mr B.; and, what is more, "one great impediment will be removed out of the way of his commencing a *Pædobaptist!*"

Let it be premised, that Mr B.'s objection in effect consists of two parts: the *first* refers to the supposed *inconsistency* of the Pædobaptists as to their own conduct, while adopting the one practice and rejecting the other; and the *second* refers to the *impertinence* of those who find fault with the Antipædobaptists for not baptizing infants, while they do not give the eucharist to their own when baptized. According to the *former*, we distinguish where there is no difference, and act without reason; in virtue of the *latter*, we justify the conduct of our opponents. The direct reply, therefore, to the first part is, that we do not distinguish *without reason;* and as to the second, that supposing our conduct to be *wrong*, it does not follow theirs is *right*. For suppose we *both* were in the wrong? Besides, Mr B.'s rejection of infant baptism and my rejection of infant communion are not parallel cases; for the question is, in what respects, and to what degree, do we reject them respectively? Mr B. rejects the former as a

* Ibid., pp. 438, 442, 443.

nullity; I reject the latter only as an *impropriety.* Were he, therefore, to grant as much in favour of infant baptism as I am willing to grant in favour of infant communion, our controversy would be at an end. The state of the question would then be transferred from what is *essential* to what is merely *preferable.* It only remains, then, that we clear ourselves from the charge of *inconsistency;* which I shall attempt to do in answer to the arguments of Mr Pierce, as transcribed by Mr B.*

§ 10. His first argument, as a general introduction, is taken from *antiquity,* thus:—"The practice of giving the eucharist to children is at *this day,* and has been for *many ages past,* used in the Greek churches, which are not of the Roman communion. It is highly probable this had been the practice of the Christian Church from the apostles' time. We have no account of the *rise* of this custom. The very *silence* of antiquity is a strong argument they admitted infants to the Lord's Supper as well as to baptism." We will admit these assertions without further examination; and grant, by the way, that from this very account (*cæt. par.*) there is more to be urged in *favour* of infant communion than *against* infant baptism.

But the argument from antiquity in either case can operate no further in strictness than to confirm a *fact,* and not to prove a *right.* The *mere existence* of a rite or custom even from the apostles' time can *of itself* conclude nothing. Therefore, our appeal to antiquity, in the case of baptism, is not to establish *positive proof,* but by way of *self-defence.* We thereby shew that our practice is not so destitute of ancient precedents as our antagonists pretend; and, being confirmed to be according to the will and intention of Christ from *other* considerations, we ought to conclude that it was the *universal* practice, where no positive counter-evidence appears. Our author's proving, that infants *have been,* or *now are,* admitted to the Sacred Supper, is no proof that they *ought to be.* Let us, then, come to his formal method of proving:—

"The baptism and communion of infants," says he, "stand upon the *same foot;* and therefore they who admit the *one, ought* to admit the *other* also. For the confirming of this argument I will shew, first, that the *same reasons* which are brought for infant baptism are in like manner applicable to infant communion.

* Pædobaptism Examined, pp. 427–436.

Secondly, That the *objections* against infant communion will admit of the *same answers* as those against infant baptism." Let us now examine his particular arguments:—

(1.) The first is founded on the *relative holiness* of infants. "One strong argument for infant baptism is taken from the words of the apostle, 1 Cor. vii. 14. But I desire only a *reason* why this will not as well prove infants' right to the eucharist as to baptism." In answer to this let it be observed—

[1.] That relative holiness admits of *degrees;* for being founded on *relation*, it must be sought from the *degree* of that relation. To be the objects of a covenant grant, as the Gentile world at large,—as those to whom the word of salvation is actually sent,—as the family of a Christian householder,—as a baptized person,—as an actual member of a Christian congregation, &c., all denote *different degrees* of relative holiness. Now—

[2.] What both the ordinances in question require, as a *qualification* in their respective candidates, is that degree of relative holiness which is necessary and *suitable* to their respective nature and designs.

[3.] Baptism stands related to the body of visible Christians *at large.* Now, that infants are *suitably qualified* for *this* relation has been proved, and is *demonstrable* from their former actual church-membership and circumcision, by the appointment of unerring wisdom. But—

[4.] The *eucharistic rite* is applicable to *those only* who may be deemed proper subjects of a *particular church* or Christian congregation. They ought to be *first* baptized, it is true; but this *alone* is not a sufficient qualification. For, as Dr Gill well observes, "Baptism is *not* a *church-ordinance;* I mean it is *not* an ordinance administered *in the church*, but *out of it*, and *in order* to admission into it and communion with it; it is *preparatory* to it, and *a qualification* for it; it *does not make* a person *a member* of *a church*, or admit him into a visible church; persons must first be baptized, and then added to the church, as the three thousand converts were; a church has nothing to do with the baptism of any, but to be satisfied they are to be baptized before they are admitted into communion with it. Admission to baptism lies *solely* in the breast of the administrator, who is the *only* judge of qualifications for it, and has the sole power of receiving to it and of rejecting from it. If not satisfied, he may reject a person

thought fit by a church, and admit a person to baptism not thought fit by a church. Saul, when converted, was immediately baptized by Ananias, without any previous knowledge and consent of the church; and it was many days after this that he proposed to join himself to the disciples, and was received, (Acts ix. 18, 19, 23, 26–28.)"* From these obvious and necessary distinctions, about admission to baptism and admission to particular church-membership, it follows that persons *before* baptism stand in *one* degree of relation to Christ, or relative holiness; that the same persons *after* baptism stand in *another* degree; and that the very same when admitted into actual church-membership stand yet in *another*. Now, I say that infants are *capable* of the two former degrees, and, therefore, *ought* to be baptized; but are *not capable* of the latter,—that is, do not answer its nature and design,—and, therefore, *ought not* to be admitted to it. For—

[5.] Though the ground of *right* to baptism and the eucharist be the same in a federal sense, yet the *capability, qualification,* and *suitableness* are different, arising from the different nature and design of the two ordinances. Thus, if a parent present himself and his infant child to *baptism,* which "a church," as Dr Gill observes, "has nothing to do with," we maintain it is the minister's duty to baptize *both.* Why? Because the *covenant right* is the *same* to parent and child; and the nature of the ordinance is a *seal* of the *first promise,* or a confirming token of initiation into that state wherein we may say, "The Lord is our God, and we are His people;" and of this state the child is *equally capable* as the parent. Thus far they are on a level; the *subjective suitableness* being found in each *alike.* But let the same parent and infant apply to a *particular church,* and the case itself alters; the fundamental *ground* of admission is *different;* there is a *degree* of relative holiness, of which the parent is capable, and of which the child is incapable, necessary for such admission. The *reason* why the *parent* is admitted is not *merely* because it is *baptized,* nor yet because it has a *covenant right* to all gospel privileges *as baptized,* but because it possesses, over and above the federal and ceremonial, a NATURAL *suitableness* to enter on this highest degree of relation. When, therefore, the infant is rejected, it is not for want of a *federal* and *ceremonial* qualification, but for a *natural incapacity,* a *personal unsuitableness,* to answer the nature and

* Body of Div., vol. iii., pp. 311, 312.

principal end of a particular church-member. Wherein this *unsuitableness* immediately consists must be sought from the nature and design of a particular church, and which will be shewn, in answer to the following argument urged by Mr Pierce :—

(2.) "I see no reason why infants' right to the eucharist may not, as well as their right to baptism, be pleaded from their being *members of the visible Church.* Upon *what reason* are some of the members of the visible Church, without any fault on their part, excluded from *any* of the privileges and advantages which God has *granted* to His Church in common?" On which I observe—

[1.] That the *Divine grant* of privileges and advantages to each member of the visible Church is not limited, except by its *capacity of enjoying* the same. Now, because an infant is *entitled,* in virtue of the grant, to every privilege, together with its parent, does it thence follow that it is *capable* of *all* the privileges granted? The truth is, it is capable of *some* of them, but not of *others.* It is *qualified* to enjoy the benefit of baptism, but not the eucharist. Thus, an infant may be *entitled* to an estate, but is not *qualified* to take personal possession and management; or a scholar may be *entitled* to all the privileges and advantages of a school, but does it thence follow that he is *qualified* for the privilege of being in the highest class? When a Jewish infant was circumcised, he was *entitled* to all the privileges of an Israelite; but was he, when only a few weeks old, *capable* of enjoying them *all?* In fact, we overlook the *nature* of privileges if we conclude that because anything is a privilege to one, it must be so to another; for if there be no *answerable qualification,* no subjective *suitableness,* no *capacity* of possessing, it can be *in those circumstances* NO privilege. In like manner, though baptism be a privilege to an infant, being capable of the benefit, as before shewn at large, yet the eucharist is *no privilege,* for want of meetness to possess it. Now the question returns, wherein lies this *want of meetness?* In answering this question, we are led to another observation, viz.—

[2.] That the very nature and end of a Christian society, or particular church, to which *alone* the eucharist stands related, requires *mutual consent* and *assistance* among the members. Its very existence, properly speaking, arises from the need there is of *mutual assistance* for edification, to the glory of God. And that society alone answers the nature and main end of a particular

church of Christ where this mutual assistance is *actually afforded.* But infants are capable neither of *personal consent* nor *personal assistance,* and, therefore, are not fit for church-membership. The very light of nature teaches that man is designed for *society,* and the *nature* of that society is ascertained from the *end* proposed by it. Now revelation shews that the *end* of a *Christian society* is mutual Christian edification in faith and love, holiness and usefulness; but the light of nature, as well as that of revelation, makes it evident that infants *are not capacitated* for this end.

[3.] That the *eucharistic ordinance* belongs to *such* a society is almost self-evident; this the *names* by which it is called, *supper, communion,* &c., shew; this the very words of the institution confirm, (Matt. xxvi. 26–28; Mark xiv. 22–24; Luke xxii. 19, 20; 1 Cor. xi. 20–34;) and this the original celebration of it tends to corroborate. The supper was administered to a *select company only,* and not to all the baptized. Jesus gave the elements only to those who might be called a particular church, of which He himself was the condescending Pastor; whereas there were numbers who had been admitted into the *general* visible Church who never partook of them.

"The *end* for which our Lord instituted this duty," says Bishop Hoadley, "was the *remembrance* of Himself; that the *bread,* to be taken and eaten, was appointed to be the *memorial* of His *body* broken; and the *wine* to be drunk, was ordained to be the *memorial* of His *blood* shed: or, according to the express words of St Paul, that the one was to be eaten and the other to be drunk in REMEMBRANCE of Christ; and this to be continued until He, who was once *present* with His disciples, and is now *absent,* shall *come again.* This remembrance is expressly mentioned in the original institution by St Luke, and more remarkably by St Paul, as a part of the *institution* received by him from our Lord himself; and, consequently, it is this *remembrance* which constitutes the VERY NATURE of this holy rite, without which this part of Christian service ceases to be what it was designed to be by its great Institutor. And, indeed, we so long ONLY keep to the original institution whilst we consider it as a rite to be seriously PERFORMED IN REMEMBRANCE of an absent Saviour. Whoever, therefore, in a serious and religious sense of his relation to Christ, as His disciple, PERFORMS THESE ACTIONS of eating bread and drinking wine, in

remembrance of Christ, as of a person corporally absent from his disciples, most certainly performs them agreeably to the *end* of the institution declared by Christ himself, and His immediate disciples."* Wherefore—

[4.] It is requisite that the Christian communicant *perform an action.* Except he be so far *active* as to *eat* bread and *drink* wine in *remembrance* of Christ, he does not answer the *nature* and *end* of the institution. This is not a mere *circumstance,* which is required of some and not of others, but a universal requisition. On the contrary, it is plain that in baptism the administrator *alone* is required to be *actively* engaged; however qualified the subject may be, he is not, in the ordinance itself, required to *perform an action,* but is wholly *passive.* Hence it appears that an infant of a day is *equally capable* with an adult of receiving baptism wherein he is *passive;* but not so with regard to the eucharist, wherein he is required to *perform an action.* The one may be illustrated by the rite of *circumcision,* the other by that of the *passover.* In the bloody rite, which was, like baptism, an ordinance of *dedication,* and whereby the subject was laid under obligations *without* his own *consent,* the receiver of the covenant sign, whether infant or adult, was *only passive;* whereas in the passover, which was a eucharistic ordinance, or a rite established in thankful *remembrance* of a fact, the parties were to *perform an action.* And this distinction arises from the *very nature* and *end* of each. From these considerations it appears that there is a good reason assignable why *some* of the members of the visible Church, without *any fault* on their part, are not admitted to the Holy Supper. For to be *naturally* unqualified, is no *fault;* and to be admitted to that for which we are not naturally and properly qualified, would be, in fact, *no privilege.*

§ 11. (3.) Our author's next argument is founded on *covenant interest:*—"Another plea for infant baptism, is their having an interest in the new covenant. And if their part in the covenant will infer their right to *one seal,* why not to *the other?* There is great need here of some *very nice distinction;*—or I cannot see how we shall be able to *urge the same argument,* when it is brought to prove their right to one sacrament, and *answer it* when it is urged to prove their right to partake of the other." I care not about a

* Plain Account of the Nature and End of the Lord's Supper, p. 28.

distinction being *nice*, provided it be a *just* one. And whether the following has not a claim on the *latter* character, let the reader judge for himself :—

The baptismal seal, being a representation of a *present* and *future* good, *certifieth* that God, objectively, *becomes* to us A GOD, *in order* that we may become to Him A PEOPLE, of which relation and obligation infants are suitable subjects. But the eucharistic seal, as a *memorial* of an *absent* Saviour, and a *past* wonderful *transaction*, *certifieth* the *truth* of that transaction, *in order* that the receiver, in his *social* capacity, or as a church-member, may be edified in faith and love by his *actual remembrance* of Christ crucified for him, and by his *actual performance* of the prescribed duty ; and, therefore, infants are not suitable communicants. And yet, be it remembered, the bar of prohibition is not a defect of the *federal* right, or *ceremonial* title, but such a natural incapacity as renders what is a privilege to others *no privilege* to them.

(4.) Another argument is urged from "the *harsh* and *injurious* treatment of infants implied in their being refused the sacrament." But we answer, that there is neither *injury* nor *harshness* implied in our refusing to give them what they are *naturally* unqualified to receive, and what, therefore, is *no privilege* to them. Whereas, when we admit them to baptism, they have not only a *federal right*, but also a *natural suitableness* to the nature and design of the institution, pleadable and decisive in their favour.

(5.) Another argument is :—" Infants are capable of salvation, and, therefore, may receive baptism, which is the *means* of salvation. And why does not this consequence as well hold to their receiving the Lord's supper, which is *as much* a means of salvation as baptism ?" To *pray* and *sing* with the spirit and the *understanding* are *means* of grace ; yes, *as much* the means of salvation as the eucharist. And why are not infants admitted to enjoy these means and privileges of salvation, to *sing* and *pray* with the spirit and the *understanding ?* The reason is evident : they are not *capable ;* for the privilege requires the *performance of a duty.* In like manner, to *eat the Lord's supper* implies the performance of a religious duty, with the *exercise* of the understanding, judgment, and memory, of which an infant is not capable.

(6.) " Another plea," adds our author, " made use of for infant baptism is, that such may be devoted to God. And certainly,

this is as good a reason for their partaking of the Lord's supper, as of baptism; since the one is as properly a *devoting persons to God* as the other." Surely this is inadvertently spoken. *A partaking of the eucharist is a devoting persons to God.* Pray, *who* devotes? Is it the *communicant* himself? Every *worthy* communicant, it is allowed, does give up himself to his God and Saviour, constrained thereto at the *remembrance* of dying love. But can an *infant* devote itself? Perhaps it will be said, the *parent* devotes his infant child. That every truly Christian parent *gives up* his child to God, none can question; he gives Him His own with gratitude, and with becoming confidence in His promise. He gives him up in his *own* praises and prayers; and (may I at length add?) *ought*, at least, to give him *to be set apart* to God, by the ordinance of baptism. But what idea can we form of a parent *devoting* his infant child, in the *very act and respect* of its own eating bread and drinking wine *in remembrance* of Christ, for its present edification and comfort! That a parent should instruct, direct, and encourage his child to *do his duty*, or *embrace his privilege*, when it appears that the eucharistic ordinance would be really such to him, is both reasonable and right. But how an infant's partaking of the Lord's supper should be the parent's devoting it to God is, to me, inconceivable. Nor will it mend the matter to say that the *minister* does; for what is there in the setting apart or in the distribution of the elements, like devoting the *partaker* of them to God? Can the minister do more than send up his devout wishes to the Father of mercies for His gracious presence and blessing to himself and fellow-communicants; and suggest to them such considerations, by a serious address, as may assist them to discharge their *own duty* in a profitable manner? And yet we are told it is "*as properly so as baptism.*" On the contrary, I insist that *properly* it is *no devoting ordinance* at all. Its *proper* nature is, an ordinance of *thankful remembrance;* and to say that this may be done by an *infant* is grossly absurd; and again, to say that a parent may *properly devote* his infant child in such an ordinance, is the same as to say, that he can *properly* perform impossibilities and contradictions. It is making one person's *own act and deed*, the *act and deed of another.* It is making an infant's *eating* bread and *drinking* wine in *remembrance of Christ*, to be the *same thing* as the parent's *wishing* it to do so. It is a making of the communicant *active* and *passive*,

at the *same time*, and in the *same respect*. It is a parent's doing *that* for the child, which, on the supposition, the latter does for itself; which at the same time, in reality, it neither does nor can do. In short, it is a pretending to perform *impossibilities* by *proxy!*

But how different the nature of the baptismal ordinance! Is not this *properly* an ordinance of *dedication?* Does it not necessarily imply the *ceding* of what we have a *natural* right to? Is it not a *transferring* of the subject from one relative state to another? And is not this applicable to an infant; may he not be *devoted* by another as *properly* as an adult? But as this is granted by Mr Peirce, it needs here no further proof.

(7.) "It has been argued, [from Luke xviii. 15, 16,] that Christ is *willing* little children should come to Him; that He is *pleased* when infants, who are not able to come themselves, *are brought by others* to Him, that He may bless them. And who has been able to assure those who make use of this argument, that Christ is only willing to have them brought to Him in *baptism*, and not in the *Lord's supper?* Is not the giving them the eucharist *as solemn a way* of bringing them to Christ as the baptizing them?" It is sufficient to reply, that Christ is neither pleased nor willing that parents should accept what is *properly impracticable*. And surely an *inaccessible way* cannot be an *encouraging way;* nor can a way which implies so many *absurdities* have any just claim on *solemnity*. The obstruction primarily lies in the *nature of the thing*, and therefore it argues neither breach of duty in parents, nor reflects on the will and pleasure of Christ, not to bring them to the Lord's supper. But no such obstruction lies in their way to baptism, as before demonstrated, (Chap. III., §§ 5–10, &c.;) and the fact of circumcision, instituted by Jehovah, is an impregnable bulwark against all arguments deduced from the *natural incapacity* of infants, in reference to their being *brought* and *devoted* to God.

(8.) Finally:—"It is frequently alleged," says Mr Peirce, "that infants are *disciples*, (Acts xv. 10;) and therefore they ought, by baptism, to be enrolled as such, and to be solemnly *initiated* to His discipline. And certainly their receiving the Lord's supper is as proper a testimony of their *continuing*, as their baptism was of their being *initiated to be* His disciples." Strange assertion of so respectable a writer! Might he not have as well said, that because

a child is *initiated* into a school, before he knows the *very letters* of his mother tongue, his making *Greek exercise* is "as proper a testimony of his *continuing*, as his entrance was of his being *initiated to be* a scholar!"

§ 12. "The *objections* against infant communion will admit of the *same answers*," proceeds our author, "as those against infant baptism." Let us not, however, take his bare assertion, but examine his evidence:—

"The only objections which carry any appearance of weight in them, are taken from their *incapacity* to perform some acts which are required in adult communicants; such as *remembering* Christ, *discerning* the Lord's body, and previously *examining themselves*. And just such arguments may be and are alleged against *infant baptism*. Infants are not capable of that *repentance* and *faith* which are required in the adult when they are baptized. And the *same kind* of answer will serve in both cases." Then I am exceedingly mistaken. One remark, however, might be sufficient to shew that our author was not free of mistake in the matter—viz., that the *incapacity*, in the one case, is an *essential* bar, a defect which admits of no adequate remedy; but that the *incapacity*, in the other case, is no *real* incapacity, is only a *mere circumstance*, and therefore wants no remedial aid. Our opponent does not pretend that the want of faith and repentance is a just reason for excluding infants from baptism; whereby he allows that it is not the *very nature* of baptism that requires these qualifications, but merely the *circumstantial difference* of the subject. On the contrary, I maintain that the *very nature* of the eucharist requires eating bread and drinking wine *in remembrance of Christ;* that *remembering* Christ, *discerning* the Lord's body, and previous *self-examination*, are *essential* qualifications of a worthy communicant, of which an infant is incapable.

"I should be glad to know of those Pædobaptists who go on the contrary supposition, *what communion* they admit infants to when they baptize them? What *one privilege* in the Church do they admit them to?" I answer, into the *same communion* as that into which John the Baptist, our Lord and His diciples, admitted those multitudes they baptized. And I suppose it will not be said that their baptism was *no privilege* because they were not admitted to celebrate the Holy Supper. *What communion!* Surely not into any one *particular* Christian society, which is

founded on *mutual engagements*. Such a church, as Dr Gill well observes, "has nothing to do with the *baptism of any;*" nor has baptism anything to do with it. The *communion*, then, is that of the *whole Christian Church* at large, as distinguished from Jews, Mohammedans, heathens, &c. *What privilege?* I answer, in the words of Paul, "Much every way; chiefly because that unto them *are* committed the oracles of God. For what if some *do* not believe; shall their unbelief make the faith of God without effect? God forbid." The *promise* is theirs; and, in *covenant right*, EVERY PRIVILEGE thereunto belonging, of which they are capable and suitable subjects. "The PROMISE, then," says Dr Owen, "as it hath the nature of a *covenant*, including the grace that God would shew unto sinners in the Messiah, and the obedience that He required from them, was from the first giving of it, the foundation of *the Church*, and the whole worship of God therein. Unto *this Church*, so founded and built on this covenant, were all the *following promises*, and the *privileges* exhibited in them, given and annexed. Neither hath, nor ever had any individual person, any spiritual *right* unto those promises or privileges, whatever his outward condition were, but only by virtue of his *membership* in *the Church* built on the covenant, whereunto, as we said, they do all appertain. Wheresoever this covenant is, and with whomsoever it is established, with them is *the Church*, unto whom all the *promises and privileges* of the Church do belong. Hence it was, that at the coming of the Messiah there was not *one church* taken away, and another set up in the room thereof. The *Christian Church* is not *another* Church, but the *very same* that was before the coming of Christ. The *promises* of the Old Testament are all made unto *the Church*. No individual person hath any interest in them, but by virtue of his *membership* therewith. And among those promises this is one, that God will be A GOD UNTO THEM AND THEIR SEED FOR EVER."* These remarks, with a little explanation, express my meaning with regard to the *church-communion* and the *church-privileges* to which infants are introduced by baptism. I would not be understood to mean, that the *first promise*, or gospel *grant*, is not addressed to any *until* they become members of the gospel Church, whereas it must be in virtue of *this promise* that any who are *afar off* have a rational inducement, and solid foundation, for *joining themselves* unto the Church. And yet, all

* Dr Owen on the Heb., vol. i., pp. 54–57.

the *subsequent promises*, and *annexed privileges*, can belong *immediately* to none but the *actual members* of the Church. And there is not any privilege, really such, which does not federally belong to baptized infants; and if we do not admit such to the Sacred Supper, it is because that would be *no real privilege* to them, which their baptism demonstrably is.

Thus I have accepted Mr B.'s challenge, and attempted "fairly to confute" the *arguments* and *objections* of Mr Peirce, "without sapping the foundations of infant baptism," and while these stand securely firm. How far this is done with *success*, whose arguments weigh *heaviest* in the scales of *impartiality*, I cheerfully refer to those who are possessed of those invaluable scales.

§ 13. Seventh, It may be objected, "If baptism seals nothing more than a *bare exhibition* of spiritual blessings, what *benefit* can that be to infants?" In reply to this let it be observed—

(1.) That the sealing of baptism is of the *same nature* with the gospel itself, which, it is allowed, is the annunciation, or *bare exhibition* of mercy and grace. Therefore, if the gospel be a mercy, baptism must be so; and the *degree* of the supposed benefit is in proportion to that of a seal superadded to a legal instrument. The former without the latter is of no use, but when added to it, increases its value; not as importing something different, but certifying more strongly the same thing. And as the most glorious displays of salvation do not, of themselves, give to any a *subjective* certainty, whereby they may conclude themselves personally possessed of it, but only an objective ground of assurance, whereby they are encouraged to accept of it, as designed for their use; so is the nature of the sealing. Consequently, if the message of salvation be a blessing, the *sealing* of that message is an *additional* blessing.

(2.) If the gospel and the means of grace, in their bare exhibition, be any benefit to nations and families, they must be so to infants as a part of them; and, for the same reason, baptism too. For if the glad tidings of salvation, in a settled ministry, be a benefit, so is God's superadded sealing of those tidings.

(3.) As the ministry of reconciliation is a blessing, independent of our *estimation* of it, so is the confirming *token* of that ministry. For who thinks to measure the benevolent conduct of the Deity, and the merciful designs of His providence, by their reception and improvement among men?

(4.) If the external standing *evidences* of *Christianity* be a benefit in their bare exhibition, baptism must be so likewise, as it may be justly ranked among those evidences.

(5.) Whatever tends to explain the nature and to enforce the authority of gospel truths must be a benefit in its mere exhibition; but this baptism does from its very nature to every *capable* subject, and, therefore, is a benefit to baptized infants, who, it is demonstrable, are such.

(6.) Whatever has a just claim on the grateful acknowledgments of adults for what they enjoyed in infancy must be a benefit; but what well-informed person is not thankful that he was born under a dispensation of mercy, under the *Christian* in preference to any other; in a country, and especially in a family, where true religion was known, practised, and inculcated? But if this be true, who sees not that baptism, since it is God's confirming seal to the truth and contents of the gospel, is a benefit, on supposition that it *only exhibits* the blessings represented by it?*

§ 14. Eighth, It may be objected, "If there be a suitableness in infants, *as such*, to the rite of baptism, (carnal descent making no difference in their moral state,) by what rule shall we determine *what children* to baptize and what not? Or rather, if it be a *benefit* to all those who are capable,—and *all* infants are supposed such,—therefore it would be a great charity in ministers to baptize all they can; and, instead of condemning Roman missionaries for their attempts to Christianise the heathens by baptizing them, parents and children, when supposed unqualified, should we not commend their pious and charitable zeal?" To this I answer by observing—

(1.) That the law of nature is not to be violated, nor the rights of nature infringed, without a *positive* Divine command. But were ministers, in the discharge of their high commission to preach the gospel, to baptize, &c., to adopt *compulsive* or *fraudulent* means, this law would be violated, and these rights infringed; while, on the supposition, they have no positive injunction for so doing. That the preaching of the *gospel*, and its establishment among a people, is a *benefit* to them, no Christian, I suppose, will deny; but yet he who employs for this purpose compulsion and fraud is a detested violator of the sacred dictates of the law of

* See Edwards on Original Sin, p. 441; and Dr Taylor's Scripture Doctrine of Original Sin, pp. 72, 73; Supplement.

nature and of nations. And as to that text (Luke xiv. 23) which has been urged as a *positive command* for such proceedings, we answer it in the same manner as we do the Antipædobaptists :— *Positive duties*, when brought to countermand natural and moral ones, are *no duties* any further than they arise from Divine authority "plainly binding and strongly commanding." So that this pretended *positive* command is a *mere nihility*, because we are not *bound* to take the word COMPEL as denoting *external force*, though it were urged that the literal and primary meaning favours that interpretation.

(2.) From what has been said, it follows, that our *influence* over others, whether adults or infants, can be no further than the law of nature and nations admit of when no positive injunction is supposed. It is evident that by a Divine constitution parents have a right or limited dominion over their children; which dominion they receive from God as a sacred deposit, or an important talent to be improved for their good. Nor is it in the power of any man lawfully to usurp the parent's place *against* his consent, (*cæt. par.*,) but this parental authority is capable of being *transferred* to another than a real parent by several ways. When this transfer is *justly* and *truly* made, whether explicitly or implicitly, (for there are many assignable instances in which the *latter* case may happen,) then the adopter, guardian, trustee, &c., of the child becomes, by universal consent, possessed of the supposed *right*, to be exercised for the *benefit* of his ward. And it is worthy of remark that this authority, wherever vested, is gradually *diminished* by the age, improvement, &c., of the child, till it becomes nearly or entirely *extinct*.

To illustrate this matter, let us suppose a person, standing in different relations to others, is come to a resolution of leaving his native country for the purpose of colonising another far distant. We will suppose, moreover, that the country whither he is going abounds with incomparably greater advantages and privileges than what he leaves behind. Now the question arises, Whom shall he take with him, and whom shall he leave behind? In this case, nature immediately dictates that, as he ought not forcibly to *compel* his *adult* children and servants, or any other relations and dependents, so he ought to take such as were in a state of dependence on his determination, and especially his *infant* children. He must act an *unnatural* part not to embrace such an oppor-

tunity of *benefiting* his child ; * and his conduct must be equally unnatural and culpable in forcibly compelling others, in proportion as they were in a capacity to judge for themselves. † Perfectly analogous to this dictate of nature was the Divine law concerning proselytes to the Jewish religion ; and since it is the voice of nature and of nature's God, it behoves an objector to produce an express, undoubted contravention from heaven, to influence Christians to a different practice, when discipling all nations to Christianity.

§ 15. Ninth, It has been objected, "If we baptize all our infants, then we shall have no adults to baptize."

But this objection amounts to no real force at all, as it is evidently parallel with the following, which all must allow is sufficiently weak—viz., "If we inculcate the principles of Christianity on the rising generation, we shall have no idolaters to convert ;" for it is notorious that the greatest part of Christian converts, in the apostolic age, came to Christ from the bosom of idolatry. However, we reply more directly, by observing, that the objection is grounded on a *false* supposition—viz., that there is something *more excellent* in adult baptism than infant baptism, or *more conformable* to the Institutor's intention. But what is *this* else than to suppose that *true* which is *disputed?* And as to the *former* branch of the supposition, be it observed—

(1.) That we are under no obligation to admit this supposed superior excellency till we are informed wherein its pretensions consist. Is it because baptism is to a baptized believer a seal of the righteousness of faith? So it is to a baptized infant ; and we are bold to affirm *as much* so as to any believer that ever was baptized. (See Chap. II.) Is it because a believer is, after baptism, under solemn obligations? So is every infant ; and, all things considered, *not less* so than any believer whatever. On the con-

* See 1 Tim. v. 8.

† "In several countries, in Spain and Portugal particularly, their [the Jews'] children have been taken from them by order of the government, to be educated in the Popish religion. The fourth Council of Toledo ordered that all their children should be taken from them, for fear they should partake of their errors, and that they should be shut up in monasteries, to be instructed in the Christian truths. And when they were banished from Portugal, 'the king,' says Mariana, 'ordered all their children, under fourteen years of age, to be taken from them and *baptized ;* a practice not at all justifiable,' adds the historian, 'because none ought to be *forced* to become Christians, nor children to be taken from their parents.'"—*Bishop Newton's Dissert. on Prophec.*, vol. i., p. 194.

trary, we insist that the *sooner* a benefit is enjoyed the higher the obligation; and this we consider as more than equivalent to any other supposed superior advantage whatever which may be pleaded by our opponents.

(2.) Baptism being a seal of the covenant, in the same sense as circumcision, (see Chap II.,) were there any weight in the objection, it would follow that (supposing the *positiveness* of the command out of the question) adult circumcision was more excellent and advantageous than infant circumcision. But will any affirm, except to support a tottering cause, that the moral and spiritual uses of that instructive rite were *better* answered when submitted to by adult proselytes than when applied to infants? It is true there were, in the former case, some advantageous *circumstances*. The adult had an opportunity of *testifying* his assent, belief, and submission; he had the advantage of devout *preparation*, by prayer and fasting; and on the solemn occasion of performing the duty, he was capable of *reflecting* on its nature, design, and obligations, and, in short, all his life after he could no less than *recollect* his personal engagements. But these circumstances of partial advantage were more than counterbalanced by others appertaining to infants. The latter, for instance, had the important privilege of being much *longer* (their age being equal) visibly related to God and His people; and from infancy had a *legal right* to all the other church-privileges as they grew capable of them. To which we may add, that initiatory rites, from their very nature, are designed to influence *every subsequent moment* of life, as well as the time of celebration.*

These things, therefore, duly considered, we are so far from thinking the universal prevalency of applying baptism to infants, in a Christian country, is a *deviation* from the real design of the Divine Institutor, that we cannot help believing the commission He gave "to disciple all nations" is eminently fulfilled therein. And instead of labouring to introduce an *alteration* in this respect, we cannot forbear earnestly praying that every such attempt may be *frustrated*, that missionaries among the heathens may ever baptize their infant children with the parents, and that every nation on the face of the globe may be *thus* discipled.†

* See Pædobaptismus Vindicatus, p. 19.

† Agreeable to this was the solemn *dying* wish of that eminently-favoured servant of Christ, the Rev. Richard Mather. This gentleman and his family, being

Coroll.—From the whole we may infer, how *unreasonable* and *wrong* it is for any *particular church* to refuse membership to any person *merely* because he was baptized in *infancy*, or is a *Pædobaptist* in principle; as also, because one was not *plunged* when he received the Christian *purification*.

barbarously haunted by the demon of persecution in Old England, after a most remarkable deliverance on the mighty waters, arrived in New England, A.D. 1635, and the year following fixed at Dorchester. "Being thus again settled in the Lord's work, he therein continued to his dying day—the Lord making him an eminent blessing, not only to Dorchester, but to all the churches and plantations round about him, for the space of almost four-and-thirty years. He did not speak much in his last sickness, either to friends that visited him or to his own children; only his son, Mr Samuel Mather, who was then a preacher in Boston, coming to visit his father, said unto him, 'Sir, if there be any *special thing* which you would have me to do, in case the Lord should spare me upon the earth after you are in heaven, I would entreat you to express it.' At which his father, making a little pause, and lifting up his eyes and hands towards heaven, replied, 'A *special thing* which I would commend to you, is care concerning the rising generation in this country, that they be brought under the government of Christ in His Church; and that when they are grown up and qualified, *they have baptism for their children*.'" That is, that the *children be baptized*, in virtue of the *parents' profession*. He wished that some care and discipline should be exercised towards the *children* of *professors*, and that those children, when they grew up and made a profession, should in consequence thereof have *their* infant seed *baptized;* and so in succession. See Dr Gillies's Historical Collections, vol. i., p. 241; Neale's History of New England.

CHAPTER VI.

PRACTICAL REFLECTIONS; CONTAINING A RATIONAL AND DEVOUT IMPROVEMENT OF CHRISTIAN BAPTISM, AND PARTICULARLY *INFANT BAPTISM.*

§ 1. Introduction. § 2. Practical Reflections:—(*First,*) From the consideration of our being *baptized* persons; as to—§ 3. First, Faith. § 4. Second, Gratitude. § 5. Third, Repentance. § 6. Fourth, Self-dedication. § 7. Fifth, Universal holiness. § 8. Sixth, Exemplary diligence. § 9. (*Second,*) From the consideration of our being baptized in *infancy;* as to—§ 10. First, Faith. § 11. Second, Gratitude. § 12. Third, Repentance. § 13. Fourth, Self-dedication. § 14. Fifth, Universal holiness. § 15. Sixth, Exemplary diligence. § 16–23. (*Third,*) As *parents.* § 24–29. (*Fourth,*) As *ministers.* § 30–36. (*Fifth,*) As *spectators.* § 37. Recapitulation.

§ 1. THE gospel contains good tidings of great joy, which shall be unto all people; and the legacy, the inestimable treasure, bequeathed to us by the last will and testament of our Divine Saviour, He *seals* not only with His blood to satisfy justice, but also by His *institutions* for our instruction and comfort. He condescends to teach us, in a sense, after the manner of men; while, at the same time, His method of teaching bears the stamp of infinite wisdom and transcendent love. In these institutions we discover the loving-kindness of the Lord adapting itself to human weakness and human wants; hereby every faculty is addressed, every affection solicited, every sin discountenanced, and every Christian grace, pious disposition, and Divine virtue encouraged. And as this is the character of gospel institutions in general, so it is particularly of *baptism* in an eminent degree. Whether we consider ourselves as *baptized* persons,—as baptized in *infancy,*—as *parents,*—as *ministers,*—and as *spectators* of this ordinance, the practical and devout consideration of it will be attended with peculiar advantages.

§ 2. (*First,*) From the general consideration of our being BAPTIZED persons, without any reference to the time when, we may gather many profitable reflections for the important purposes of encouraging our *faith,* provoking our *gratitude,* furthering our *repentance,* engaging our *self-dedication,* advancing our *holiness,* and of exciting our *diligence.*

§ 3. First, Is baptism a *seal?* What an objective ground of *faith* does it exhibit!

Am I a *baptized* person? Then I have not only God's word of promise, and His solemn oath, to encourage my faith in His gospel, but also this standing institution which was applied to me for that purpose. As an oath puts an end to all strife, so does the legal *sealing* of an instrument. And can I any longer doubt that the promise is for *my* use? Surely the bare *word* of the God of truth, who cannot lie, were enough to suppress every rising doubt respecting the matter testified; but when He confirms the testimony with an *oath,* He seems willing *more abundantly* to encourage my faith. And yet, as if this were not sufficient, He puts the matter so far out of doubt as to point me out *by name.* He hath put His *own name* upon me; and His language, in effect, is—I will be *thy God,* thy Father, thy everlasting portion: how long wilt thou be faithless? Can faith, the most rational faith, require any more? Lord, let me never be guilty of the impious crime of disbelieving the freeness of Thy grace, Thy willingness to save me, even *me,* however oppressed with guilt, and defiled with pollution! I can never distrust myself too much; but is it possible to put too much trust in the Lord, to put too much confidence in my Divine Shepherd? Does He call me by my name? Has He set me apart for Himself? Wherefore should I doubt, or what possible plea has unbelief to urge?

Faith should respect a Divine *testimony.* But *what* is the testimony of God? That God *offers,* nay, *gives,* unto me eternal life, and this life is in His Son. Is it on *condition* of future amendment and a virtuous conduct? No; the encouraging *grant* is suspended on no condition whatever. My *possession* of the mercy sealed by my baptism is to be enjoyed by *faith;* and this faith of the operation of God purifies the heart, pacifies the conscience, works by love, dispels every guilty fear, and is productive of the fruits of righteousness to the glory of God. Does diffidence object: "Why believe that the promise is to *you,* though baptized?"

Nay, rather, *why not* to me? Am I not a sinner, under the sound of the gospel, and set apart to its privileges? And is not this one of them that Jesus Christ is willing to save me from sin and hell, and from the hand of all that hate me? that I may by *faith* enter into rest, by faith be justified from all things, have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, receive reconciliation and atonement, have my iniquities subdued, and my soul everlastingly saved? If I may not receive these blessings by *faith*, without the previous condition of my performing works of righteousness, what would become of me as a *dying* sinner? How otherwise could the gospel be good tidings, to sinners on the verge of eternity, as well as to those who may live to manifest their faith by their works?

Will discouragement again urge, "Faith is the *gift* of God, and therefore is not in my own power?" If it be the gift of God, as it certainly is, let me make the greater speed in making my application to Him for it. And even *this* is a privilege to which I am admitted. Nor does *faith* being the *gift* of God hinder *believing* to be my *duty*. Nor yet does my *attempting* to discharge a duty any way prevent the duty itself discharged being a *supernatural effect*. Is it not my *duty* to *attempt* to *love* God, to love Him for the sake of His infinite worthiness, as well as His stupendous love to a perishing world, in the gift of His Son? And yet if I am a true lover of God, I dare not ascribe the attainment to anything short of sovereign, distinguishing grace. Is the Divine *nature*, as possessed of all possible perfections and excellences, of all that is amiable and lovely, merciful and gracious, the proper object and rational ground of Divine love? So is the *promise* of God, confirmed by His oath and seal, the proper object and rational ground of Divine *faith*. The promise, sealed by my baptism, as a golden chain let down from heaven, is my only ground of hope as a perishing sinner. And *as a sinner* does the promise regard me; under *that character* it addresses me. O charming news! O glorious discovery! Here is a remedy presented to me, placed full before my eyes, equally *free* and *efficacious*. Is it presumption to receive it, when I am assured by the messenger who brings it, that not to receive the bounteous donation, under the pretence that it belongs not to me *a sinner*, is in effect to charge the Promiser, the God of truth, with insincerity and falsehood? What greater evidence can scrupulosity itself wish for, that the grant of mercy is designed for *me?* What in the whole compass of the

nature of things can be imagined as a proof to me, a sinful creature, that the Divine *promise* is intended for *my use*, than that it should be directed to me by name, accompanied with the oath and seal of Jehovah? Will not the blood and the water, will not heaven and earth, be swift witnesses against me if unbelief still prevails?

I am not required to believe what is either *unreasonable* or *untrue*. For what is more *reasonable* than to *believe* what the all-wise, almighty, and gracious God testifies, and testifies in *such* a manner? And it would be impious to suppose that He requires me to believe anything which is not *strictly true*. His *testimony* is not concerning my *goodness*, my *attainments*, my *actual possession* of grace, of faith, of holiness, &c.; but concerning *His own* exceeding great and precious promises, THAT BY THESE I MAY BECOME a partaker of a holy nature, with every new-covenant blessing through time and eternity. Let my baptism then not only remind, but also *assure* me, that with God there is mercy held forth for me; that even I, however undeserving and condemnable in myself, may have free access to a throne of grace, may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.

§ 4. Second, Does baptism exhibit important *blessings?* Then how should the consideration of it provoke my *gratitude!*

Am I a *baptized* person? Then to *me* is held forth the *remission of* all my *sins*. The very institution itself is a faithful *witness* for the God of grace, that He stands ready to pardon. O glorious privilege, to have to do with the King of kings and Lord of lords, who, though I have highly offended Him with my sins, holds in His gracious hand a free, full, and everlasting pardon! Am I placed in His Church by baptism? With *additional* evidence, therefore, may I consider the following wonderful words addressed to *me*:—"The Lord, The Lord God, merciful and gracious, long-suffering, and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin," (Exod. xxxiv. 6, 7.) And as these words were proclaimed for the use of the guilty and alarmed Israelites, after the two *first* tables of stone were broken, occasioned by their idolatry and folly; so are they directed to me now, after all my past follies and provocations. Even to *me* are the following words directed:—"Thou hast made me to serve with thy sins, thou hast wearied me with thine iniquities. I, [O wonderful retaliation!] even I, am

he who blotteth out thy transgressions for mine own sake, and will not remember thy sins. Put me in remembrance; let us plead together: declare thou, that thou mayest be justified," (Isa. xliii. 24–26.) Lord, this is not the manner of men: Thou givest liberally without upbraiding. In grateful wonder, I would reply, "Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage? He retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy. He will turn again, he will have compassion upon us; he will subdue our iniquities: and thou wilt cast all *my* sins into the depths of the sea. Thou wilt perform the *truth* to Jacob, and the *mercy* to Abraham, which thou hast sworn unto our fathers from the days of old," (Micah vii. 18–20.)

Am I a *baptized* person? Then still greater *blessings* are yet granted and sealed to me. For hereby I am *assured* that *salvation* from the malady of sin, the dominion of lusts, the malice of Satan, and the pains of hell, is exhibited and presented to *me*. And as this invaluable blessing is directed to me *by name*, ever since I have borne the name of my Saviour, received at my baptism, so it comes as a free gift, and without charge. "Stand still," therefore, "and see," in faith and affectionate gratitude, "the *salvation* of the Lord." I am invited to the wells of salvation, without money and without price. How can I doubt either His power or willingness to save me to the uttermost? Is not this the voice of my Sovereign and Saviour: "Look unto me, and *be thou saved?*" And shall not gratitude, unfeigned gratitude, have a peaceful abode in my favoured soul? Yes; "Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits: who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with loving-kindness and tender mercies," (Ps. ciii. 1–4.) In Christ my Saviour I have a propitiation for my sins, and a robe of consummate righteousness. If taught of God to *understand* the things thus freely given me out of the unsearchable riches of His grace,—if my heart is *opened* like that of Lydia, to receive these inestimable benefits, I may further add:—"I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride

adorneth herself with her jewels. For as the earth bringeth forth her bud, and as the garden causeth the things that are sown in it to spring forth; so the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth before all the nations," (Isa. lxi. 10, 11.)

Do I still complain of spiritual dulness, impotency, and ingratitude? Let me further consider the ample contents of the promises, and see whether ingratitude itself will not be confounded at the rehearsal of them. For does not JEHOVAH say to me, as well as to Abraham, "I am thy shield, and thine exceeding great reward?" Does He not, in effect, invite me to take a view of a *spiritual* inheritance, incorruptible, undefiled, and unfading, as He did to Abraham concerning the terrestrial Canaan, who had nothing to trust in, more than myself or any other sinful descendant of Adam, but the *righteousness of faith* which was signified and sealed to him, as it is to me, by a Divine ordinance:—"Lift up now thine eyes, and look from the place where thou art, northward, and southward, and eastward, and westward. For all the *heavenly* land which thou seest, to thee will I *give* it. Arise, walk through the *promised* land, in the length of it, and in the breadth of it; for *I will give it unto thee.*" May I not appropriate the words of Moses to Israel, with a little variation:—"He is thy praise, and he is thy God, that hath done for thee these great and *marvellously gracious* things which thine eyes have seen?" And how reasonable the following inference:—"Therefore thou shalt *love* the Lord thy God, and," as the best expression of thy gratitude, "keep his charge, and his statutes, and his judgments, and his commandments, alway!" May I not, without presumption, appropriate the words of Amasai to David, "Peace, peace be unto thee, and peace be to thine helpers; for *thy God helpeth thee?*" But am I afraid to admit this language, because only allusive? Then let me attend to declarations more directly designed for the use of the Church in all ages, and therefore *for mine*, as a member of it:—"Fear thou not, for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God: I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee: yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness. . . . . For I the Lord thy God will hold thy right hand, saying unto thee, Fear not; I will help thee. . . . . I will help thee, saith the LORD, and thy REDEEMER, the Holy One of Israel. . . . . Thou shalt fan *thy spiritual enemies*, and the wind shall carry them away, and the whirlwind shall scatter them: and thou shalt rejoice in the LORD,

and shalt glory in the Holy One of Israel." And lest a discouraging surmise should have room to intervene, he adds:—"When the poor and needy seek water" to refresh their souls, "and there is none" in the whole compass of mere nature suited to their case, "and their tongue faileth for thirst, I the LORD will hear them, I the God of Israel will not forsake them. I will open rivers in high places, and fountains in the midst of the valleys," (Isa. xli. 10–18.)

Am I a *baptized* person? Then I have the enlightening, instructing, and comforting influences of the Spirit of promise, exhibited for *my use*, with *superadded* evidence and certainty. If earthly parents, who are evil, know how to give good gifts unto their children, how much more shall my Father who is in heaven give good things, even the greatest of blessings, His Holy Spirit, to them that ask Him? And why not to me? Have I any scriptural or any rational ground of suspicion? Yes; the same Lord who instituted water-baptism is ready to baptize me with the Holy Ghost and with fire. He will take of the things of Christ and shew them unto me. He is ready to guide me into all necessary truth, —to comfort me in every trouble,—to shed abroad the love of the Father in my soul,—to reprove me of every sin,—to help my infirmities,—to give me wisdom, and that liberally, without upbraiding,—to teach me the way of peace, holiness, and fruitful living to the glory of God. O my soul, what wouldest thou have more? Dost thou complain of hardness of heart, so that these and the like precious promises do not affect thee? Then remember that He will take away the stony heart, and will bestow a heart of flesh. Plead this promise, and that which follows:—"This is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel"—of which house thou art, as a believer in Jesus—"after those days, saith the Lord: I will put my laws into their mind, and write them in their hearts; and I will be to them a God, and they shall be to me a people: and they shall not teach every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying, Know the Lord: for all shall know me, from the least to the greatest. For I will be merciful to their unrighteousness, and their sins and their iniquities will I remember no more," (Heb. viii. 10–12.) When I consider, therefore, that these promises, grace and glory, and *every good thing*, are exhibited and sealed by my baptism, how should the consideration of it operate as a powerful incentive to incessant gratitude and thanksgiving! And—

§ 5. Third, What a call to *repentance* does the devout consideration of baptism afford!

Am I a *baptized* person? Then under what solemn, what inconceivably strong *obligations* have the above benefits laid me? For the greater the benefits, the greater the obligations. Are the blessings sealed by baptism great, glorious, infinite, eternal realities? The love of the Father, the atonement and grace of the Son, the influences and fellowship of the Spirit? present peace and future glory? present pardon and everlasting life? Then, have I given these blessings held forth in the promise, and sealed to *me* by baptism, a *suitable* reception? Though directed and sent to *me by name*, confirmed by the oath and seal of God, how often have they been disregarded! How has the most insignificant object, the most trifling circumstance, the most uninteresting occurrence, or the most insipid tale, engrossed my attention, while the faithful and merciful record of Jehovah has found no welcome! The gracious message from heaven, though worthy of all acceptation, has long found me careless, perhaps wilfully ignorant, hard-hearted, in love with folly, in league with sin and hell. What shall I say? A prodigal son, bent on my own ruin, and lifting up the heel of rebellion against a gracious God! Oh that my head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep at the remembrance of these things! How do I deserve to be fed with the bread of tears, and to have tears to drink in great measure, for breaking these bands asunder, and casting away these cords of obligation far from me! Nay, if I speak of demerit, how do I deserve to be cast into the hottest hell, to suffer everlastingly, for the misimprovement of such astonishing love and mercy! Would not my damnation be *just?* If the means of grace are enjoyed, and the grace of the means exhibited, what have I to say against the unfavourable sentence of my righteous Governor and Judge? Am I not an unprofitable servant? Have I not buried my talent in the earth? May not the Lord appeal to heaven and earth against my ingratitude, as he once did against Israel?—"Hear, O heavens; and give ear, O earth; for the Lord hath spoken: I have nourished and brought up *a child*, and he has rebelled against me."

But am I so sinful, laden with iniquity, evil and corrupt; have I so forsaken the Lord, provoked the Holy One of Israel unto anger, and gone away backward, that there is no hope? No; for

His mercy endureth for ever. Even *now* am I told, that though my sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. "Behold, *now* is the accepted time; behold, *now* is the day of salvation." Oh the riches of Divine grace, the unsearchable riches of Christ! Though my sins be great, Thy pardoning love is greater. Though my crimes rise high, Thy mercy is higher. Oh the wonderful efficacy of the Redeemer's merits! "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin." This my baptism sealed unto *me*. And is it possible that my hard heart should still remain unmelted under the hot beams of Divine, unchanging love? Does not every weapon drop from my rebellious hand? Does not evangelical sorrow pierce my very soul? Behold a debt of ten thousand talents freely forgiven! Though with my sins I have pierced the Lord of glory, yet, looking to Him, by faith in His blood, He removes my guilt, takes away all iniquity, loves freely, pours into my soul peace with God, and leads me to rest and refreshing joys for His name's sake. These blessings, sealed by baptism, must needs either aggravate my guilt and misery, or else promote genuine repentance. Oh that they may answer the purposes of grace, and not of avenging justice! O my soul, despisest thou the riches of His goodness, and forbearance, and long-suffering; not knowing that the goodness of God leadeth thee to *repentance?*

Mr Matthew Henry well observes:—"Our baptism engageth us, not only to the first repentance from dead works, but to an *after* repentance, as there is occasion. Our first washing in the laver of baptism obligeth us every day to 'wash our feet' (John xiii. 10) from the pollutions we contract."* And as there is on every one baptized an *obligation* to repent, so he has the most abundant *encouragements* for it. For what is more desirable to the guilty than pardon, free, full, and everlasting? This was the encouragement Peter gave to the guilty Jews: Acts iii. 19, "Repent ye therefore,"—though ye delivered up Jesus, and denied Him in the presence of Pilate; though ye denied the Holy One and the Just, and desired a murderer to be granted unto you; and killed the Prince of life, whom God hath raised from the dead,—repent, "and be converted, *that your sins may be blotted out*, when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord." "While the hue and cry is out against the malefactor, he flies; but

* Treatise on Baptism, p. 195; Sir J. B. Williams's Edition, p. 1187.

the proclamation of *pardon* brings him in. This kingdom of God (Matt. iv. 17) is come nigh unto us; it was in baptism applied *to us in particular*, that the *encouragement* might be past dispute." *

§ 6. Fourth, The devout consideration of baptism is a powerful inducement to *self-dedication.*

If I am a *baptized* Christian, I have been *dedicated* to Father, Son, and Holy Spirit by His minister; for this is necessarily implied in baptism. Was this *right*, or was it not? Nay, was it not a high *privilege?* If so, it must be right to *approve* of it, and to be *thankful* for it. Now, in what way can this be done *so proper* as by *self-dedication?* Rather, can a thankful approbation of the baptismal favour exist at all without it? Is not the withholding of this tribute a virtual denial of its being a privilege? But if the gospel be a privilege to fallen man, its direction to me in *particular*, signed, sealed, and delivered, must be a most singular blessing. I bless Thy glorious name, O Lord, that a covenant of mercy was ever announced to any of mankind—to Adam, to Abel, to Enoch, to Noah, to Abraham, &c.; but what shall I render unto Thee that this covenant has been, by a gracious providence, directed unto *me*, —has terminated upon *me*, so undeserving and sinful! Was there anything in me that called for such discrimination? What am I, or my father's house, that I should be thus privileged? It is owing to a sovereign *providence* that my lot is not cast among American Indians, or the savages of Africa; and it is owing to sovereign *grace* that England is illuminated with the Sun of righteousness. When I think on these things, and the numberless blessings therewith connected,—when I consider that I have been ministerially dedicated to the only living and true God and Saviour of men, according to *His will*,—I say again, *what* shall I render unto the Lord? What have I which I have not received? What tribute can my grateful heart bring unto the Lord which is not His own already? Yet He will not despise what I bring Him of His own. By the mercies of God, I will and do present, not only my *body*, but my *soul* also, a living sacrifice unto God, which is my reasonable service. Am I not *His* in all respects? Not to give up myself to Him, then, is to commit robbery and sacrilege. I am not only the work of His hand, and the sheep of His pasture, but also am *redeemed*, not with corruptible things, as silver

* Treatise on Baptism. p. 195; or, p. 1187, as above.

and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ. How reasonable and just, therefore, a voluntary and affectionate surrender of myself to my God and Saviour! And what exercise can equal it, either in *pleasure* or *profit?* Is it a *pleasure* to the honest mind to pay a just debt, or to the generous mind to make restitution? Unspeakably more is the pleasure and satisfaction I have in giving up myself, without fear or reserve, to the God of love and grace. How delightful the thought that I am not my own! I am bought with a price; I have been delivered up to my proper Owner; and now, with inexpressible complacency, I acknowledge my being the rightful property of my Redeemer. Oh that I may be found, while I have breath or being, glorifying God in my body and in my spirit, which are God's! And surely as it is delightful, so it is *profitable.* While I resign all, I obtain all; but while I kept myself to myself, I had neither pleasure nor profit. I was then a stranger to my best interest. Now appears, with peculiar force and beauty, the wise man's paradox:—"There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty." And again:—"There is that maketh himself rich, yet hath nothing; there is that maketh himself poor, yet hath great riches," (Prov. xi. 24, xiii. 7.)

Do I still find reservedness or sloth spreading their baneful influence over my soul? Am I still waiting for more powerful inducements? Behold, another inducement presents itself—one that may well fill me with everlasting wonder! The all-sufficient God, (how shall I express myself?) JEHOVAH *gives Himself* to me. Astonishing conveyance! "I will be *thy God,*" says He. He confirms it with His oath, and ratifies it with His *seal.* Does the Lord, by a covenant grant, make over His glorious self to me as my portion? This is surely an irresistible motive. What sort of a grant is it? Not an imaginary or a feigned, but a *real* and *sincere* grant. I *may* venture, I *would* venture, ten thousand souls, were they mine, on the sincerity and truth of it. If it be not a truth that I, as a *baptized* person, am privileged with this covenant grant, "*I will be thy God,*" then I may question whether the sun ever shone upon Britain on a summer's day! Lord, in return, take sole possession of me! Make me Thy living temple; let my favoured heart be the throne of Thy reigning grace; let it be my sweet employ, through time and eternity, to behold with open face as in a glass—the gospel mirror—the glory of the Lord, as my

covenant portion, that I may be changed into His lovely image, from glory to glory, as by the Spirit of the Lord.

§ 7. Fifth, The devout consideration of baptism is a suitable and strong motive to universal *holiness*.

To be *baptized*, is to be devoted to a conformity with Christ: which consists in the destruction of the body of sin, and a life of purity, heavenly-mindedness, and spiritual liberty. By this ordinance of initiation, methinks the Lord says, with peculiar emphasis, "Be ye holy, for I am holy." To the Christian Church, set apart to Himself by the initiating rite, He in effect says, "Ye are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you out of darkness into his marvellous light: which in time past were not a people, but are now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy. Dearly beloved, as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts, which war against the soul; . . . . that *all around you* may, by your good works which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation," (1 Pet. ii. 9–12.) What is the end of our *holy religion*, of which baptism is the badge? Is it not "that we should be holy and without blame before *our heavenly Father* in love?"—that we may be presented "holy, and unblamable, and unreprovable in his sight?"—that we should be "saved from our sins," and "redeemed from all iniquity?" Let me, therefore, "gird up the loins of my mind, be sober, and hope to the end, for the grace that is to be brought unto me at the revelation of Jesus Christ: as an obedient child, not fashioning myself according to the former lusts in my ignorance: but as he who hath called me is holy, so may I be holy in all manner of conversation; because it is written, Be ye holy, for I am holy," (1 Pet. i. 13–16.)

"We are by our baptismal covenant," says Mr Henry, "obliged to mortify sin, and in baptism receive the promise of the Holy Ghost for that purpose. 'We are buried by baptism,'—*i.e.*, we are, in profession and *obligation*, quite separated and cut off from sin; as those who are not only dead, but buried, are quite parted from the living, and have no more any intercourse, correspondence, or fellowship with them. We are likewise 'risen again' to another sort of life. Not as the widow's son and Lazarus were raised, to live just such a live as they lived before, but as Christ was raised; who, though He continued on earth forty days after His resurrec-

tion, did not shew Himself openly, nor converse with this world as He had done; but His life was altogether heavenly, and no more in the world. Thus our baptism, *obliging* us to die to sin, and live to righteousness, we may be said therein to be buried and risen with Jesus Christ. A Christian, therefore, who is by baptism buried with Christ, and yet lives in sin, is like a *walking ghost*, or the frightful motion of a dead body. We should often remember that we are *buried*,—*i.e.*, cut off from a life of sin; and *risen*,—*i.e.*, entered upon a life of holiness. We should, therefore, see to it, (saith the excellent Davenant,) that what is done once sacramentally, in baptism, *should be* always done really, in the life."* Lord, grant me the prevailing aids of Thy Holy Spirit, that I may reckon myself to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord; that sin may never reign in my mortal body, that I should obey it in the lusts thereof. May I never yield my members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin; but may I yield myself unto God, as one alive from the dead, and my members as instruments of righteousness unto God —servants to righteousness, unto holiness; that now being made free from sin, and become a servant of God, I may have my fruit unto holiness, and the end everlasting life, (Rom. vi.)

§ 8. Sixth, Baptism may be improved as a proper incitement to exemplary *diligence*.

Am I a *baptized* person? Then let me answer the great ends of my baptism—to fight the good fight of faith, not uncertainly as one beating the air, but with zeal according to knowledge; run the race set before me; press toward the mark of my high calling of God in Christ; redeem the time; work while it is day, for the night cometh when no man can work; be diligent in business, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord. May He into whose service I am enlisted, into whose vineyard I am sent, and to whom I am accountable, cause me to "abound in faith and *all diligence!*" Oh that I may "shew *growing* diligence to the full assurance of hope unto the end; that I be not slothful, but a follower of them who through faith and patience inherit the promises!" (Heb. vi. 11, 12.) "Baptism is a talent," says Mr Henry, "which must be traded with, and accounted for. It is a price put into the hand to get wisdom: and with this, as with other talents, the charge is, 'Occupy till I come.' By working upon our souls a sense of the

* Treatise on Baptism, pp. 174, 175; or, p. 1183, as above.

obligations we are laid under by our baptism, we put this talent into the *bank*, and, if we were not wanting to ourselves, might receive from it the blessed *usury* of a great deal of comfort and holiness." * To further my holy diligence in those works and ways to which my baptism was designed to lead me, let me often recollect, and be deeply impressed by these truly wise maxims:—"He becometh poor that dealeth with a slack hand; but the hand of the *diligent* maketh rich. He that gathereth in summer is a wise son; but he that sleepeth in harvest"—*the harvest of his Christian profession*—"is a son that causeth shame," (Prov. x. 4, 5.)

Alas! how many ignorant and slothful professors must one day take up this bitter lamentation, "The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved," (Jer. viii. 20.) Often have we been exhorted to give all diligence to make our calling and election sure; but we stood against every call, careless and unmoved. We flattered ourselves that we *possessed* a talent, while yet it lay *unimproved*. "How many baptized persons are there," as Mr Henry justly observes, "who are altogether strangers to the covenants of promise! who look upon baptism only as a thing of course—nothing more than the custom of the country! No wonder they do not *improve* that which they do not *understand*. Baptism being the badge of our profession, to understand that is to understand our *holy religion*—the nature, duties, privileges, and designs of it; to *all* of which our baptism doth some way or other refer. It is sad to consider what ignorance of these reigns even in the Christian world; and how many are little better than baptized heathens." † Nevertheless, "The Lord hath done great things for us, whereof we are glad. Turn again our captivity, O Lord, as the streams in the south," (Ps. cxxvi. 3, 4.) Some who are called by Thy name understand, and gratefully acknowledge, the great things Thou hast done for them, and the inestimable privileges conferred upon them; but others continue the deluded captives of sin and Satan. Oh that Thy Spirit may be poured upon all flesh! Then shall "the wilderness be turned into standing water, and dry ground into water-springs," (Ps. cvii. 35.) "Then the eyes of the *blind* shall be opened, and the ears of the *deaf* shall be unstopped: then shall the *lame* man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the *dumb*

* Treatise on Baptism, p. 161; or, p. 1180, as above.

† Ibid., pp. 167, 168; or, p. 1181, as above.

sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert," (Isa. xxxv. 5, 6.) Then shall our fruit be holiness to the Lord; and it shall be found, "some an hundred-fold, some sixty-fold, some thirty-fold," to the praise and glory of God; and the end everlasting life.

§ 9. (*Second,*) Let us now proceed to a devout and rational improvement of baptism as received in INFANCY. One very justly observes, "When an ordinance comes to be *disputed*, it is commonly *neglected*, or slightly attended, by the generality of people; and lies between them like a *controverted estate*, concerning which something is done to maintain the *suit*, but little to manure and improve the *land*. Men think it a sufficient plea for their sinful neglects in such cases, that it is a disputable thing; and till all be agreed upon the point, they hope they may be allowed to sit still and look on, and then engage when they see what side will prevail. Thus disputes about the *ministry* have made the ways of Zion to mourn, for the fewness of those that come to the solemn assemblies. This is, generally, the case of the ordinance of baptism. People have had it commonly buzzed in their ears that seeing the infant subjects of that administration are incapable of understanding it, and making present actual improvement, there is little reason to retain the practice of that which seems so barren and unprofitable. But holy men, who have made it their study to dive into the nature and use of all ordinances, and to work upon their own hearts by them, have, for many ages, no doubt, drawn abundance of sanctifying influence from it, and the *principles* and grounds upon which it hath been administered; and those of this age who have had the holy wisdom to turn matters of *dispute* into *practice*, have been able to say by their experience, in a manner, as the man born blind, in the dispute between him and the Pharisees concerning Christ, 'Herein is a marvellous thing, that ye know not from whence he is, and yet he hath opened mine eyes,' (John ix. 30.) So they wonder it should ever enter into a dispute whether infant baptism be of God, or no, seeing it hath been, by the sanctifying influence of the Spirit of God, a conduit of abundance of gracious supplies to them, for which they have had cause to bless God the longest day of their lives. And the very experience of this is no small encouragement to them to own and value it, seeing it cannot easily enter into their hearts, that God should convey *sanctifying influences*, for so many years, by a

mistaken and misapplied ordinance; especially when the main efficacy of that ordinance, in order to the mentioned effects, depends upon *that very circumstance* of age wherein it is charged to be misapplied. For though it may in some cases be granted, that an ordinance administered with some considerable circumstantial irregularities may sanctify; yet that those *irregularities themselves* should be the channels of sanctifying grace is not easily imaginable. Now this is the case of *infant baptism*. Many holy men, of many ages, have found their hearts warmed and quickened, in the exercise of faith, repentance, love, thankfulness, by the consideration, not only of *baptism* and the personal covenant therein sealed, but also baptism under the circumstance of *infant* administration. And, indeed, that the Spirit of truth should dictate, and the God of truth answer those prayers, which are offered up on so grossly mistaken grounds as those of *will-worship*, (the crime generally charged on infant baptism,) seems most absurd." *

But is not this gentleman *singular* in his opinion? Is not the supposed advantage more in *speculation* than reality? Let the following language, uttered from the deliberate judgment of one whose *abilities* as a divine, and whose *rational* and *sincere devotion* as a Christian, few will question, determine:—"There would not be so much quarrelling about *infant baptism*, if there were but more care to make that practical improvement of it which is required. It is owing to a *carnal heart* that the *benefit* of it is not obtained, and then the thing itself is disputed. In this circle many a poor soul hath been made giddy: infant baptism is questioned, *because* it is *not improved*; and then it is not improved *because* it is *questioned*. If any man set himself seriously to 'do His will' in this matter, by a diligent and conscientious improvement of his baptism, 'he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether we speak of ourselves,' (John vii. 17.)" "There are *many* humble, serious Christians, who can experimentally speak of the *benefits* of it. For my own part, I cannot but take this occasion to express my *gratitude* to God for my *infant baptism*, not only as it was an early admission into the visible body of Christ, but as it furnished my *pious parents* with a good argument (and I trust, through grace, a prevailing argument) for an early dedication of my own self to God in my childhood. IF GOD HAS

* Ford's Dialogue concerning the Practical Use of Infant Baptism; Epist. Dedicat.

WROUGHT ANY GOOD WORK UPON MY SOUL, I desire with humble thankfulness to acknowledge THE MORAL INFLUENCE OF MY INFANT BAPTISM." *

§ 10. First, Was I baptized in *infancy?* Then I have an *additional* encouragement to exercise FAITH upon the *promise.* Were I baptized but *this day*, there would be an encouraging ground of faith, that the promise is *unto me*, signed, sealed, and delivered; but when I consider that this foundation of faith, the exhibited promise, has been laid, and *appropriated* for my use, in *infancy*,—that the charter of conveyance has been incontestably *sealed*, almost as soon as I came into *existence*,—it is a *superadded* encouragement. "Baptism seals the promise of God's being to *me* a God," says Mr Henry, "and that is greatly encouraging; but infant baptism *increaseth* the encouragement, as it *assures* me of God's being the God of my fathers, and the God of my *infancy*." "Shall I question the kindness of one who is my own friend, and my father's friend? the faithfulness of one who was in covenant with my fathers, and always true to them? It is a great support to faith to consider, not only that God is my God, but that He was so *betimes*. He who took me when I was *brought*, surely will not cast me off when I *come* myself, though weak and trembling and unworthy. He who began in ways of love and mercy to me *so early*, will not now be wanting to me, or backward to do me good. Loving-kindnesses, which have been 'ever of old,' must needs be very favourable to faith and hope." † The nature of the gospel *grant* is such, that the *longer it stands* as a matter of record in favour of the party *baptized*, the stronger and more indubitable becomes his *title* to the things granted; wherefore, the consideration of my being baptized in my *infancy* is a circumstance of encouragement to *faith.* Is it "usual to insert in the king's grants, that they are made, not at the suit of the grantee, but *ex speciali gratia, certa scientia, et mero motu regis;* and then they have a *more liberal* construction?" But on the contrary, is it equity, and legal prudence, that "a grant made by the king, *at the suit of the grantee*, shall be taken most beneficially *for* the king, and *against* the party?" ‡ Let this illustrate the superior advantages of the grant being made in my *infancy*, and sealed by baptism, compared with what was

* Henry's Treatise on Baptism, pp. 155, 156, 118; or, pp. 1170, 1171, as above. † Ibid., p. 201, 303; or, pp. 1188, 1889, as above.

‡ Blackstone's Commentaries, vol. ii., book ii., chap. xxi., § 2.

obtained *at the suit* of the grantee. It is true, the encouragement to faith is *abundant* every moment to a returning sinner, from the gracious *testimony*, the faithful record of Jehovah; but it is *more abundant* in proportion to the *early date* when the title was signed and sealed.

Lord, didst Thou find me out, in the course of Thy gracious providence, and cause Thine exceeding great and precious promise of mercy, forgiveness, and righteousness, Thy good Spirit and eternal life, to terminate on my *infancy?* Didst Thou thus find me out without my seeking or deserving? How free and sovereign Thy mercy! Didst Thou confer a legal *right* to these spiritual and everlasting blessings, by a *deed of gift*, directed, signed, sealed, and delivered *to me*, for my use and service, when I deserved no pity? Nay, when I deserved to be cast out into the open field to the loathing of my person, to be passed by and left polluted in my own blood, even then, in my tender infancy, in my helpless and wretched state, Thou hast had compassion upon me. Oh, the covenant care, the unparalleled kindness, of my heavenly Father! Let me take the account from His own lips:—"When I passed by thee, and saw thee polluted in thine own blood, I said unto thee, when thou wast in thy blood, Live; yea, I said unto thee, when thou wast in thy blood, Live. . . . . Now, when I passed by thee, and looked upon thee, behold, thy time was the time of love; and I spread my skirt over thee, and covered thy nakedness: yea, I sware unto thee, and entered into a covenant, saith the Lord God, and thou becamest mine. Then washed I thee with water," (Ezek. xvi. 6, 8, 9.) Astonishing favour! And though I have not come up to my privileges, and "have not remembered the days of my youth, but have fretted the Lord in all these things, and despised the oath in breaking the covenant," He still adds, "Nevertheless, I will remember my covenant with thee in the days of thy youth, and I will establish unto thee an everlasting covenant. Then thou shalt remember thy ways and be ashamed. . . . . And I will establish my covenant with thee; and thou shalt know that I am the Lord: that thou mayest remember, and be confounded, and never open thy mouth any more because of thy shame, when I am pacified toward thee for all that thou hast done, saith the Lord God," (Ezek. xvi. 60–63.)

One well observes:—"The saints are many times fain to appeal from *conditional* promises and comforts to *absolute*—viz., the

freeness of justifying and renewing grace in the respective declarations and offers of them; upon the same reason may they have recourse to infant baptism—the most lively representation and obsignation of both these. This, therefore, being their refuge, if God's seal *add*, as it doth undoubtedly *to us*, any certainty to His word; then, surely, for such persons to reflect upon the *seal* of baptism administered to them in infancy must needs *fortify* them in that refuge. I now treat, not of considerations prevailing with God, but considerations working upon us; not such as further Him in point of *faithfulness*, but such as further us in point of *faith*. Now such things may be of precious use to *us*, as are not of a like influence upon God. All the arguments we urge in prayer do not at all move God, but only fortify our *faith* to depend upon Him. So here, though God have a like reason in Himself to move Him to take care of a soul that became one of His family but *yesterday*, as of one that hath been in His family *forty years* or upwards, yet it must needs be a *more rational encouragement to us* to depend upon Him, *now* that we have been related *so long* to Him, than it would be to have begun a relation but yesterday." * This early relation was a peculiar encouragement to David's faith, when he said, "Thou art he that took me out of the womb; thou didst make me hope when I was upon my mother's breasts. I was cast upon thee from the womb: thou art *my God* from my mother's belly. Be not far from me, for trouble is near; for there is none to help," (Ps. xxii. 9–11.) "Though every one that is a child of a believer had formerly, and still hath, a covenant right to God *before* circumcision and baptism; and so every such person, circumcised or uncircumcised, baptized or unbaptized, at least as long as the neglect is not his own fault, hath the *same plea* which we have been speaking of, yet he hath it not to urge with the *same evidence* and ground of *assurance* as he that can plead the covenant with the *seal* hath: otherwise it must needs follow, that the sacraments *add* nothing at all to the covenant in point of *certainty* and *evidence;* which I think no sober Christian will affirm." †

§ 11. Second, Was I baptized in *infancy?* Then I have an *additional* incentive to *gratitude*. How highly have I been honoured, how greatly benefited! For from that *early* period has the pardon of sin, free salvation, eternal life, with every new-covenant blessing, been *sealed* to me. Had every circumcised

* Ford's Dialogue, ut supra, pp. 39, 40, 43. † Ibid., p. 49.

Israelite, when grown up, special cause of *gratitude* for the particular circumstance of *infant circumcision?* So have I for my *infant baptism.* What a visible *relation* was then constituted between me and God in Christ! Was I then incapable of understanding the nature and force of the obligations under which I was laid? So was a circumcised infant; but the obligation was firm notwithstanding. He became from that time forth *additionally bound,* in duty and in gratitude, to the Lord. O my soul, art thou ever disposed to undervalue this privilege? Blush at thy ingratitude. If to be dedicated to God in baptism when an infant was not a privilege, what was? I may safely challenge ingratitude itself to shew that any benefit *greater* than this was or could be ever conferred upon me by my parents. When my ungrateful heart is ready to say, *What profit* is there in *infant* baptism? let it again reflect, *What profit* is there in *adult* baptism which is not more than counterbalanced by the former? I say it again—to be baptized when an infant is the *greatest* external privilege of which infancy is capable. And if at any time this is questioned, let me inquire what is a *greater?* If a greater there is, let it be produced, and it shall suffice. If not, let deserved gratitude glow in my breast for the distinguishing favour. I was then added to the Church, *that I might be saved.* I was then constituted a visible member of Christ, that *I might be conformed to Him.* I was then put in the way I should go, that, when grown up, *I might not depart from it.* I was then visibly engrafted into Christ, *that I might bring forth much fruit,* and thus be found *His approved disciple.* Are not these high privileges? And especially when I consider that there was in me nothing meritorious to demand, nothing amiable to solicit these privileges. This time of my espousals was, indeed, a time of unmerited, unsolicited love. From a state of distance I was brought *near.* From a stranger I was made a "fellow-citizen with the saints, and of the household of God;" not less so than any circumcised Israelite. All these privileges—let me not forget that—are of the nature of *means.* May I therefore not only cultivate a grateful spirit at the remembrance of all Thy benefits, O Lord my God, but also be careful to express my gratitude by a proper use of these beneficial means, that I may apprehend that for which I was apprehended of Christ Jesus!

§ 12. Third, Was I baptized in *infancy?* Surely, then, my

miscomings, transgressions, and backslidings, are levelled at a circumstance of Divine goodness that makes the call to *repentance* much louder. "The goodness of God leadeth to repentance." Every cord of obligation that is broken enhances guilt. The sins of a person greatly privileged are crying sins. Every time, and in every instance, that I have acted unworthy of my baptism, I have been guilty of breaking a cord of Divine kindness; so far have I shaken off the yoke, the easy yoke of Christ, from my neck.

Now, that *infant baptism* has the advantage over *adult* baptism in promoting *repentance*, or godly sorrow for sin, I think appears from the following extracts on the subject:—"When God aggravates the sin of His people Israel (Ezek. xvi.) under the similitude of a *child* taken into His special care from the very womb, He lays a sufficient ground for the deducing of this conclusion: That for any person or people, so related to God from *infancy*, as He there expresseth, to depart from God by sinning against Him, is a very great aggravation of sin. Suppose God, therefore, pleading against any sinner of the Jews' nation in the strain of that chapter, and you will see it yield as great aggravations of *personal* sins as *national*:—'Thou, in the day in which thou wast born, wast naked, and in thy blood, utterly naked and destitute of original righteousness, and defiled with the stain and guilt of original sin, an object of loathing and abhorrence to a pure and holy God as I am; yet when I passed by thee, and saw thee polluted in thine own blood, I said unto thee, when thou wast in thy blood, Live; yea, I said unto thee, when thou wast in thy blood, Live. When I passed by thee and looked upon thee, behold, (and wonder at my goodness therein,) thy time (even that time) was a time of love, and I spread my skirt over thee, and covered thy nakedness; yea, I sware to thee, *in circumcision*, and entered into covenant with thee, *saith the Lord*, and thou becamest mine, and I washed thee with water, &c., and bred thee at my cost, *under my ordinances*, from that day; yet hast thou forgotten all this kindness, and rebelled against me.' Alter the word *circumcision* into *baptism*, and make the application to yourself, and then see whether it doth not afford a cutting aggravation of sin. Anabaptism yields no such aggravation of sin, for it allows no man any special relation to God, no covenant, no engaging ordinance, no peculiar covenant mercy, till actual faith, *i. e.*, till years of discretion." *

* Ford's Dialogue. ut supra, pp. 49-51.

Another "ground of *humiliation* from infant baptism is from the consideration of the *apostasy* that, upon that account, is in the bowels of every such person's sin as was then admitted into covenant with God. And methinks I may to very good purpose write bitter things against *sins of youth* upon this ground. Ah, wretch! did God enter thee in His school, nay, admit thee into His family from a child? did He in much mercy make thee a covenanter with Himself? And yet, for all this, thou hast no sooner been able to speak or go, but thou hast spoken lies against Him, and gone astray from Him. Yea, since thou hast been capable of understanding thy way, thou hast, contrary to the duty of thy natural allegiance, entered into a contrary covenant and confederacy with the devil and death, and thine own lusts, and maintained a war with this God with abundance of youthful heat and activity. O sinner! remember from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and renew thy covenant with God, before, by more riveted and aggravated apostasies, thou provoke Him to deal with thee as thou hast dealt with Him. Luther tells us a story of a virgin that was wont to resist temptations with this answer—*Baptizata sum*, 'I am baptized, Satan, and being washed, shall I with the sow wallow in the mire again?" I confess this is a prevalent caution from the *general* consideration of baptism; but I am much mistaken if it conclude not *more forcibly* when strengthened with this *special* circumstance of the time of the administration which we are now handling. Thus:—'Shall I sin against an ancient friend, mine and my father's God? Shall I sell the inheritance of my fathers? (1 Kings xxi. 3, 4;) forsake my father's Friend? (Prov. xxvii. 10.) Shall I now forsake my Master in whose house I was born, and admitted to the privileges of His family as soon as I was born? Shall I now be reconciled to sin, to which I was a sworn enemy from my mother's breast? God did me the greatest (external) kindness I was capable of in my infancy, and what wrong hath He done me since that time, that I should now entertain a motion of unfaithfulness to Him?' 'God hath been my Master these fourscore years,' said old Polycarpus, 'and He hath all this while done me no hurt, and shall I forsake Him now?' Surely all the arrows in the quiver of Anabaptism will not pierce so deep into the heart of a temptation as this will."*

"Can I do otherwise than melt into tears of godly sorrow,"

* Ford's Dialogue, ut supra, pp. 51, 52, 54, 55.

says the pious Mr Henry, "when I reflect that I was baptized in infancy? For if so, then, by sin I have ill requited God's *early kindness* to me. I have offended my God, and the God of my fathers, who, upon my fathers' account, dealt so favourably with me. It is often mentioned as an aggravation of sin, that it is against *the God of our fathers:* thus 2 Chron. vii. 22, 'Because they have forsaken the God of their fathers.' So 2 Chron. xxviii. 6. Loved when a child, and yet revolting, and dealing treacherously! When we were polluted and exposed, then regarded, pitied, taken up, washed, adorned, taken into covenant, adopted into a good family; and was not that a time of love—love sealed, love insured, preventing love, unmerited love? What! and yet despise such rich love, spurn at such bowels! *Do ye thus requite the Lord? Is this thy kindness to thy friend?* How should we charge this home upon our souls in our repentance, and blush for our ingratitude? *Nourished, and brought up, and yet rebelling!* Born in His house, brought up in His family, brought betimes under His law, and yet shaking off the yoke, and bursting the bonds! Did God take me into covenant with Himself when I was a *child,* and look upon me ever since as a covenanter; and yet no sooner have I been able to go, than I have gone from Him; to speak, than I have spoken to His dishonour? Those who are not baptized till years of discretion have no such considerations to humble them for the sinful vanities of childhood and youth as they have who were baptized in their infancy. Let this, therefore, break our heart for the sins of our youth."*

§ 13. Fourth, Was I baptized in *infancy?* Then I have a *superadded* inducement to *dedicate myself* to the Lord. I was dedicated by my parents, and by Thy ministering servant, Lord, and now I would testify my approbation of what they did on my behalf, by *giving up myself,* which is my reasonable service, to Thee as *my Lord* and *my God.* So far am I from questioning the *natural right* of my parents over me, or the *propriety* of their giving up that right to Thee, as the God of *grace,* that I bless Thy name for giving them the opportunity and inclination so to do. I would be thankful that a minister was applied to on the occasion,—that he complied,—that what was thus done on earth was confirmed in heaven,—that my lot was cast among Christians, to whom are committed the oracles of God,—and that my unprofit-

* Treatise on Baptism, p. 197-199; or, p. 1188, as above.

able life is thus prolonged. What method shall I adopt to express my grateful feelings? "I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord." I will pay my obligations to the most High, by the aids of His grace, in the best manner I am able. O Lord my God, "I bless Thee for my creation, preservation, and all the blessings of this life; but above all, for Thine inestimable love in the redemption of our world by our Lord Jesus Christ; for the means of grace," and particularly my *infant baptism*, by which I was dedicated to Thy mercy, protection, and service, "and for the hope of glory. And I beseech Thee give me that due sense of all Thy mercies," and especially that holy ordinance whereby I was initiated as a member of Thy Church, "that my heart may be unfeignedly thankful; and that I may shew forth Thy praise, not only with my lips, but in my life, by *giving up myself* to Thy service, and by walking before Thee in holiness and righteousness all my days, through Jesus Christ my Lord."

§ 14. Fifth, Was I baptized in *infancy?* What an *additional* obligation and motive to cultivate universal *holiness!* Shall I embrace and cherish now, what was so long ago and ever since prohibited? Shall I not "renounce the devil and all his works, the pomps and vanities of this wicked world, and all the sinful lusts of the flesh," seeing these things are contrary to the order, peace, and harmony of the house in which I was brought up? Have I from a *child* borne the name of Christ? Is not this a great *honour?* Let me, then, detest everything which has the least tendency to discredit so honourable a connexion. Having been *brought up* in the house of God, shall I forget that *holiness* becometh it for ever? Having been brought up in a palace, the Church of the living God, which He hath built for the house of His kingdom, by the might of His unrivalled power, and for the honour of His glorious majesty; and shall I embrace dunghills? Was I pointed out by name, while an infant, as an *intended servant* of the King of glory; and shall I now rest satisfied with a state of bondage to sin and Satan? Was I then, so betimes, *called* to holiness; and shall I continue still under this destructive vassalage? Was I, when a helpless infant, guilty and polluted, adopted by my heavenly Father, *to the intent* that sin might not have dominion over me; that I might be in the way of holiness and happiness; and shall not this be a motive for me to *perfect holiness in the fear of God?*

"Is Israel a servant? is he a home-born slave? why is he spoiled?" Am I a child, brought up in God's house; why then am I so destitute of holiness? Where is the robe of righteousness, the garment of salvation, and the beauty of holiness? This is the *proper* dress of the family. Whence came I, then, to be "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked?" This is not the fault of my heavenly Father, and His house is well-furnished with every needful supply. O my soul, "hast thou not procured this unto thyself, in that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God, when he led thee by the way? Thine own wickedness shall correct thee, and thy backslidings shall reprove thee: know therefore and see that it is an evil thing and bitter, that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God, and that my fear is not in thee, saith the Lord God of hosts. For *of old time* I have broken thy yoke, and burst thy bands. I had planted thee a noble vine, wholly a right seed: how then art thou turned into the degenerate plant of a strange vine unto me? saith the Lord? How canst thou say, I am not polluted? . . . . Wilt thou not from this time cry unto me, My Father, thou art the guide of my youth? Turn, O backsliding children, saith the Lord, for I am married unto you." Turn, O my soul, from the forbidden and dangerous paths of sin, to the King's high road of holiness; and the rather *because* there thou hast been placed, and oughtest to have walked, from the beginning. Return, O prodigal, to the holy rules and precious privileges of thy Father's house; and the rather *because* it is the house of thy *infancy.* The holy God is the God of thy infancy; the Holy Saviour is the Saviour of thy infancy; the holy Church is the house of thy infancy; the holy angels are the guards of thy infancy; and thy holy baptism was a solemn and express entrance on all these holy relations and connexions. Wherefore, let *holiness to the Lord* be my *motto,* resulting from my baptism; and let the consideration of my *infant baptism* give it a peculiar emphasis and powerful influence on my mind.

§ 15. Sixth, Was I privileged with Christian baptism in my *infancy?* Than let me improve my privilege for more exemplary *diligence.* "As we are Christians, we have not only temptations to be resisted, and sins to be avoided, but work to be done; great and necessary work, for God, and our souls, and eternity. Now nothing can more quicken us to that work than a lively sense of our relation to the Lord Jesus Christ as His servants: 'Truly I

am thy servant,' (Ps. cxvi. 16.) To maintain that sense, and to excite us to an answerable *diligence* in our duty, we should frequently consider our baptism; especially our *infant baptism*. . . . . Our baptism, as administered in infancy, doth very much strengthen the engagement; and may help to quicken our dulness, and put us forward, when we begin to loiter. . . . . If our engagements to Him had been only the result of our own choice, we might have been tempted to think that a recantation would dissolve the obligation; but we are the Lord's by a *former dedication*." God is our kind master:—"Kind indeed, who would take us into His family, and admit us to the protection, provision, and privileges of His family, when we were incapable of doing Him any actual service. Being now grown up, this consideration should quicken us to a double *diligence:* that we may redeem the time lost when we were children, and make some grateful returns to our generous Master for the *early* tokens of His good-will. 'When Israel was a *child*, then I loved him,' (Hos. xi. 1;) and shall not we then study what we shall render for that love?"* How long have I been in my Divine Master's house and service, and yet how little have I improved my invaluable privileges, and how imperfectly discharged incumbent duty! May the quantity of time lost make me the more careful of the remainder. May the consideration of the length of road which I have travelled in departing from God, make me the more diligent now I am brought back to the King's highway.

§ 16. (*Third*,) The baptism of infants may afford us, considered as PARENTS, many devout and profitable reflections. Am I a *parent?* Then let me improve baptism: to increase my *thankfulness* to God, for admitting my children to partake of it with myself,—to testify my *desire of benefiting* my children,—to influence my *prayers* for them,—to assist me in promoting their *salvation*, their knowledge of that gospel which baptism seals, their faith and repentance, holiness and happiness,—to inculcate on them Christian *tempers*, relative *duties*, and a *conversation* becoming the gospel of Christ.

§ 17. First, Is my child admitted to baptism? Then let me improve the happy occasion to increase my *thankfulness* to God. Is the Lord a covenant God, through a Mediator, to *any* of the children of men? This is a subject of pleasing wonder. But is

* Henry's Treatise on Baptism, pp. 189, 191, 192; or, pp. 1186, 1187, as above.

He a covenant God to *me?* This calls for my warmest returns of faith, love, and thanksgiving. Faith in the covenant promise, love to the Divine Promiser, and thanksgiving for the invaluable contents. Yet this wonderful condescension, great as it is, does not express the whole of the Divine liberality. My covenant God is also the God of my *children:* "I will be a God to *thee* and to thy *seed.*" "I will be a God to *thee,*" says Jehovah. "Wonder at His condescending goodness. Whence is this to me, a worthless worm of the earth! so mean, so vile, and yet taken into covenant with God! interested in the Lord of glory, His attributes, His promises! 'Who am I, O Lord God!' (2 Sam. vii. 18.) That God should take any notice of me, should shew me any token for good, is wonderful, considering how undeserving, how ill-deserving I am; but that He should communicate His favours in a covenant way, interpose Himself for security, make Himself a debtor to His own truth, is such a paradox of love, as challengeth everlasting wonder and praise. . . . Let this be the burden of every song of praise, 'To perform the mercy promised, and to remember his holy covenant.' (Luke i. 72.)"* The same infallible lips further add, "I will be a God to *thy seed.*" Were these words written for the sake of the Jewish Church only, or for the Christian Church also? Doubtless for the Christian Church, and for the Christian parent also. How can I avoid being thankful for the Divine grant, as extending to my *child* with myself? I cannot help regarding what is a privilege to *this,* as matter of thankful praise from me on its behalf. How can it be otherwise? for my child is a part of myself, not only in the estimation of a fond parent, but by the laws of God and men; by the concurrent suffrage of nature and of nations. Excellent are the following remarks of Mr Henry, for the transcribing of which there needs no apology to the reader:—"Much of the mercy of having children lies in this, that we have them to devote to God; not only a seed to be accounted to *us,* but 'to be accounted to the Lord for a generation,' (Ps. xxii. 30;) not only to honour us, and to bear up our names, but to honour God, and to bear up His name in the world. What is an estate or office good for, but to glorify God with it, and that we may have something to lay out and use for His honour? Bless God that He hath not only given you a child, but that He hath invited and encouraged you to give it to Him again, and is pleased to accept of it.

* Henry's Treatise on Baptism, pp. 133, 234; or, p. 1195, as above.

Be thankful that you have a child admitted, from its birth, into the bosom of the *Church*, and under the wing of the Divine Majesty. Hannah had been long barren, and it was her great grief; at length God gave her a Samuel; but it doth not appear that his birth was so much the matter of her praise, as his *dedication* to the Lord. When she had brought him, in his infancy, to the tabernacle, then it was that she said, 'My soul rejoiceth in the Lord,' (1 Sam. i. 28, ii. 1.) You have more reason to be thankful that you have a child born to inherit the *privileges of the covenant*, than if you had a child born to inherit the largest estate." "Bless God that He hath erected His tabernacle and sanctuary in the midst of us; and hath not left *Himself* without witness, nor *us* without the means of grace and salvation. He hath not dealt so with many other nations, (they and theirs are *afar off;*) and should not this make us very thankful?" "Rightly understand the nature and intention of the ordinance, and you will say with wonder and praise, 'This is no other than the house of God, and the gate of heaven: this gate of the Lord into which the righteous shall enter.' Enter into it therefore with *thanksgiving*, and into His courts with *praise*." "Your children are polluted, but bless God that there is a *fountain opened*, not only for the house of David, but for the inhabitants of Jerusalem, (Zech. xiii. 1.) Draw water, therefore, with joy out of these *wells of salvation*. Rejoice that there is such a covenant, which you can, through grace, lay any claim to. The expressions of joy and rejoicing *at the baptism of a child*, should be turned into this channel; and should terminate in God, and in the new covenant."*

Is my *child* baptized? Oh, what shall I render to the Lord for the seal of His covenant to me and *mine?* To *us* are given, to *us* are sealed, exceeding great and precious promises. "The hearts of parents, *in that action*, should be affected," one observes, "with abundance of joy and comfort; looking upon that day as a day of their children's espousals to Jesus Christ; and, by consequence, a day that should be more joyful to a godly parent than the day of their marriage to the best earthly matches that can possibly be desired. If a parent should live to see all his children well married, he would say, and well he might, (as to the outward condition of his posterity,) 'What a happy man am I that have lived long enough to see all my children so well disposed of!' But I tell all parents

* Treatise on Baptism, pp. 235, 236, 238; or, pp. 1195, 1196, as above.

that fear God, that the days in which their children are *baptized* are far joyfuller days than the days of their marriage (if it might so come to pass) to so many of the most potent and mighty princes in the world. And thou that hast seen all thy children baptized, hast lived long enough to see them ten thousand times better bestowed. Thou hast espoused them to Christ, and He hath made them a jointure beyond the abilities of all the monarchs in the world; and therefore write down the days of your children's *baptism* as their *wedding-days;* and as often as you have occasion to remember them, remember it is your duty to rejoice in the Lord, and bless Him on that account."*

§ 18. Second, As a *parent*, let me use and improve the Christian ordinance of baptism, to testify my *desire of benefiting* my infant child. I would consider baptism in the light of a *benefit conferred*, rather than that of a *duty performed*. To think otherwise would lead me to a *radical* mistake. Nor should I consider the baptism of an *adult* in any other light. The baptism even of *such*, properly considered, is a *privilege received*, not a *debt discharged*. It is our *duty* to *receive a gift*, only in an *indirect* sense; but it is *directly* our *privilege*. It would be the *duty* of my child, were he adult, to *receive* any advantageous offer *remotely*, but his *privilege*, in the most *direct* sense: consequently, baptism, which in its proper nature is, demonstrably, a *blessing* or benefit, has nothing to do with the *duty* of the subject of it *directly*, but *remotely*. For, as he may be *benefited* by an estate or legacy, *without* any supposition of dutiful *compliance*, because such an act of benefiting has no *immediate* concern with duty; in like manner, he may be benefited by baptism, as a Divine grant. And yet the very same thing which in its own nature is a *beneficial grant*, be it what it may, *does not* require of an infant any dutiful compliance, but of an adult *does* require it. Which shews that *compliance* or submission, in reference to a beneficial grant, is but a *mere accident* of the subject, but not an *essential* qualification; but still, when any, who have a liberty and right of choosing, embrace what is in itself beneficial, they act *dutifully*, and *vice versâ*. Thus it was, for instance, with respect to circumcision.

If the *direct* notion of baptism be that of a *benefit* granted by Jehovah to *me and mine*, like the precious promise it seals, it clearly follows, that their want of understanding and voluntary

* Ford's Dialogue, ut supra, part ii., p. 92.

acceptance is no just bar to its application. Wherefore, how can I discharge the duty of a parent, who impartially consults the welfare of his child, if I withhold from it what is divinely bequeathed to it in common with myself? I am desired to consult the good of my children, by bringing them up in "the nurture and admonition of the Lord;" this shews that the *means* of this nurture and admonition, the *rules* of Christian discipline and instruction, the sacred oracles, are *intended for their use.* How, then, can I, in justice to my trust, appropriate to them the contents of the instrument sealed, but withhold from them, without any forfeiture on their part, the *seal*, of which they are as capable as myself? Does God ever say, *Baptism* is not to your infant children though the *promise* is to them? If He does not tear off the seal from His *will* concerning them, nor requires me to do it, why should I do it? Instead of putting my fancy to the rack for some excepting clause, whereby they may be deprived of the baptismal benefit, let me thankfully acknowledge the loving-kindness of the Lord in putting such a painful discovery out of my power, and even out of the power of all those who most zealously attempt it. Let me not be ashamed to do this act of kindness to my child, even in the great congregation, if thought most convenient. God is not ashamed to be called *its God;* Christ is not ashamed to say, "Suffer it to come, or to be brought to me, and forbid it not;" and shall I be ashamed or backward to own that honourable relation, that advantageous approach? Is Christ willing to take it as a lamb to His fold, a member to His Church; and shall I, to whom it is a second-self, of whom it is, as it were, a part,—shall I *alone* negative the gracious motion? I cannot, and, without an authority which I have not discovered, I will not: but will say, encouraged by so many rational, scriptural, irresistible motives, before the world, before the Church, and in the presence of professed opposers—"Behold, Lord, here I am, and the child, or children, Thou hast graciously given me. What Thou grantest to my offspring, I desire as a faithful steward not to deprive them of, but faithfully and cheerfully to appropriate for the intended use."

§ 19. Third, Am I the *parent* of a baptized child, or children? How should their visible relation to Christ and His Church influence my *prayers* for them! Though morally polluted, yet relatively they are not unclean, but *holy.* According to the will of Christ, I have given up my natural right in them, and over them,

to the God of grace. They are dedicated to Father, Son, and Spirit, that they may be in *every respect* what Christianity requires them to be. They are such as the Lord my God hath *called;* and their calling is a high and holy calling. May I command nothing, require nothing, endure nothing, and do nothing, unworthy of such a relation and holy calling! Lord, teach and assist me to bring them up *as Christians*, in Thy nurture and admonition. They having been discipled and baptized, may I be found diligent and successful in "teaching them to observe all things whatsoever Thou hast commanded us!" Oh, what precious promises are sealed to them! May they have an early and saving acquaintance with these promises! Oh that they may speedily know the things freely given them of our covenant God! May no backwardness or neglect on my part keep them in ignorance of the things sealed to them, or foster a criminal indifference! Various and important are the blessings and obligations exhibited in baptism, as we have seen, (Chap. II., § 15–21.) Oh that *every one* of these blessings were actually possessed, and every obligation, according to their capacities, were discharged, by my dear children!

Mighty Saviour! I would make my supplication unto Thee, in behalf of *every child* Thou hast graciously given me, with the faith and importunity of the woman of Canaan (Matt. xv.) in behalf of her daughter, saying, Have mercy on me, O Lord, thou Son of David; my child (this child and the *other*) labours under the guilt, pollution, disease, and tyranny of sin, without Thy help. Lord, help me. I cannot doubt of Thy *power*, nor while Thy word, Thy oath, Thy sacred seal stand uncancelled, can I doubt of Thy *willingness* to save to the uttermost all that come to Thee. I do not ground my supplications on the worthiness of myself or mine, but on Thy *free grant* of covenant favours. This my faith would rest upon. Were I to admit and plead this free grant actually made to my children, and yet not baptize them, I should be guilty of a criminal solecism in my Christian professon. I should then *mutilate* the gift of God, and *withhold more than is meet*, which would tend to *impoverish* the legatees, the Church of Christ, and probably my own soul. I have therefore admitted Thy covenant gift in its full extent; and received both the instrument and the seal in faith. Now, Lord, help me to make them acquainted with their privileges and obligations. By Thy Holy Spirit bless my endeavours, and command success. Are we the objects of the promise, the

rich blessings of the new covenant, and yet neither free, holy, nor happy, but the reverse? Surely, then, we are not straitened in Christ, nor in His gospel, but we are straitened in our own bowels. Oh that, for a recompence in the same, we, as the children of the covenant, may be also enlarged! (2 Cor. vi. 11–13.)

Compassionate Saviour! I bring my children unto Thee, who hast said, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not; for of such is the kingdom of God." Take them up in Thy arms of mercy, and bless them. Thine they were, Thou gavest them me, and hast made them partakers of the covenant means of grace; oh, receive them under Thy special protection and guidance, make them the subjects of the grace of these means, which it is Thy will they should enjoy!

"The sealing of the covenant in general, as a token of God's good-will to our seed, is a sufficient handle for *faith* to take hold on, in *praying* for our children. I see not how those parents can with equal confidence pray for their children, who deny them to be in covenant, and so set them upon even ground with the children of infidels."* No *prayer* for a blessing is acceptable but the prayer of *faith;* no *blessing* can be prayed for in faith but what is *promised;* to have a promise is to have a *covenant* grant; wherefore, I can *consistently* pray for my children *in faith,* no further than I allow them an interest in the gospel *covenant,*—that is to say, that the administration and economical *privileges* of mercy appertain to them, and consequently baptism; nor should anything be deemed a bar to the enjoyment of them, but incapability or a criminal rejection. But they neither criminally reject, nor are incapable; consequently, the covenant and its seal terminate and rest upon them, and in warding off *any part* of what was thus intended for their use, I must be blame-worthy. How can I plead in *faith* promised mercy, while I deny to them the *token* of mercy? If baptism, the *token,* be not theirs, neither is *promised* mercy theirs; and if the latter be not theirs, *faith* has no foundation in reference to their happiness. *Hidden counsels* do not *testify* or assert any particular truth to me concerning my child. Through grace, I can think, with adoring complacency, of myself and mine being in the hand of a sovereign God; but the *sovereignty* of God, *predestination, eternal* covenant interest, *particular* redemption, and the *distinguishing* application of grace, are not the objects of

* Henry's Treatise on Baptism, p. 242.

gospel faith, properly and directly. As far indeed as they are *testified* of in revelation as *facts*, which are only *general*, so far, and no further, faith regards them. While unexplained, and therefore in the class of *secret things*, they belong to *God;* whereas the things which are *revealed*, and these *only*, belong to me and my children. The *arcana* of the Divine government neither are, nor in the nature of things can be, either the *objects* of my *faith*, or the *rules* of my *duty*. In short, they are not, they cannot be, the foundation of the PRAYER OF FAITH. Take away the plea of *covenant interest*, and faith is struck *dumb*. Take away *covenant promises*, and faith is struck *blind*. Take away *covenant faithfulness*, and faith has no *standing*. But, blessed be Thy name, O Lord my God, my children's *covenant interest* is founded on Thy *testimony*, and remains indisputable, therefore I can *plead in faith;* Thy precious *promises* are directed to *each* by name, as a covenantee, and therefore I may *view in faith* Thy merciful designs towards them; Thy *faithfulness* was never known to fail, it *cannot* fail, and therefore the *heirs of promise* may have strong consolation, *faith* having two immutable things to stand upon—the *promise* and the *oath* of that God who *cannot lie*. Lord, increase my faith; and bless my children with the saving knowledge of Thy covenant! Amen.

§ 20. Fourth, Am I the *parent* of baptized children? Let me improve their baptism for their *conversion* and *salvation*. That baptism may be considered as a moral means of conversion, faith, and repentance, is evident hence: if the *gospel* be so, *baptism* is—except we maintain a self-evident absurdity, that the heavenly *charter* has one use and tendency, and the *seal* of that charter another. And with respect to *infants*, it is as much so, at least, as *any other* part of the gospel dispensation can be. If salvation being come to a house lays all the members of the family under obligations of receiving that salvation, as they are or become capable, that exhibited salvation may be justly termed a *means* of conversion. In like manner, the seal which authenticates that salvation in the most unequivocal form must be equally entitled to the same if not a superior rank. Not to say, that it is *matter of fact* that infant baptism has been frequently so owned. And, indeed, it appears to me that it would be unaccountably strange if otherwise. If the *instrument* sealed be deserving of credit, or a

means of faith, must not the *seal itself*, the broad seal of heaven, be considered in the same light? Here observe—

(1.) Our children, as the children of the covenant, and baptized, have a *peculiar right* to the MEANS of conversion. To illustrate and confirm this point, let the following remarks be considered:—

"The *oracles of God* were *committed* to the Jews, and this upon the account of circumcision. They were a people that were solemnly and *sacramentally* the Lord's, and God commits His oracles to them. He *permitted* them to others *providentially;* but He *committed* them to the Jews *federally*, as the law of the kingdom He would govern them by. They owed their Bible to circumcision. God's covenant was in their flesh, and therefore God instructed them with the *instrument* in which it was drawn up. It is clear that the oracles of God (that pure law which, as David saith, *converts* the soul, Ps. xix. 7) are the *portion* of a people in covenant with God. Our infants, therefore, being, according to our principles, in covenant with God, are *entitled* to the Bible, and all the contents thereof. Add to this, the *ministers*, the dispensers of this Word, are, upon the account of *church-membership, theirs*, with all their gifts, graces, and labours. Pastors and teachers are set up *in the Church*, (1 Cor. xii. 28,) and given to *them* as a peculiar fruit of Christ's ascension, (Eph. iv. 12.) God's husbandmen are set over His *own enclosure*, His shepherds over His *own flock*, and His builders over His *own building*. If any persons, therefore, be 'aliens from the commonwealth of Israel,' no members of the Church, lie common with the rest of the world, shut out of this enclosure, be not sheep of this fold, no stones in this building,—however God may *providentially* extend the benefit of His ministers' labours to such persons, yet they can claim no *covenant right* or title to any spiritual advantage from them. But our children, even from infancy, by our principles, are entitled by a *covenant right* to all those precious emoluments which accrue therefrom. To which I may add, *private means* of conversion, to which there are promises made. That *νουθεσία Κυρίου*, the 'nurture of the Lord,' of which the apostle speaks, *instruction* and *correction*, as ordinances of God, and all the promises made unto them, are not to be extended beyond the Church, as to the benefit that may be *expected* from them.

"But may not a godly parent of an Anabaptistical judgment obtain that blessing upon his labours in the education of his child,

whether his child be [deemed] in covenant with him or no, baptized or unbaptized? I deny not but he may. For the mercy of God to His people is many times larger than their faith or prayers. So that God may look upon those children as in covenant with Him, and deal with them as such, whom their parents deny Him a [visible] title to. God may, and I doubt not doth many times *remember* the covenant which they sinfully *forget*; and does them good upon the account thereof, when they *never plead* it.

"But, can it be supposed that ordinances should be so visibly *ineffectual* upon such numbers of those to whom they and the blessing of them do peculiarly belong? No wonder at all that it should be so. The apostle answers this very objection, in my judgment, in the case of the Jews, and their ordinances, Rom. iii. 3. When he had spoken concerning the *peculiar right* of the Jews to the oracles of God, (ver. 2,) he foresaw the objection that might thence be started: But how came it to pass that so many of them were never the better for them? The apostle answers this objection thus: 'What if some did not believe? shall their unbelief make the faith of God of none effect?' The *privilege* of the Jews, in the enjoyment of ordinances, was continued to the Church by God's faithfulness. So that though divers of them perished under them through *unbelief*, yet God's covenant in the vouchsafement of them was entire and unbroken notwithstanding. In like manner, I may say concerning the *children of Pædobaptists*, their *privilege* in the peculiar right they have to converting ordinances is not at all impaired by the inefficacy of those ordinances upon any, or any number of them. It is their *privilege* to enjoy them, and it will be the *aggravation of their guilt* that they do not improve them. And although they have a peculiar right to the blessing of ordinances, as well as the ordinances themselves, yet because this right is, as the covenant is that derives it, *external*, it becomes ineffectual to many, through their own neglect of seeking to God in His own way for the obtaining thereof. Besides, to the shame of many of us it may be spoken, divers parents among us do not *understand*, and others, out of dissatisfaction as to their covenant interest, *dare* not, or through sinful neglect *do* not, plead with God for their children [and with their children for God] as they have sufficient warrant to do.

"And here I shall ask you a question concerning *promises of conversion*: To whom, think you, do such promises belong? To

those *within* the Church, or those that are *without* it? An alien from the commonwealth of Israel is also a stranger to the covenants of promise, (Eph. ii. 12,) and so no promise of the covenant *belongs to* any one that is not a church-member. Be, then, yourself judge whether the principles that exclude infants of believing [*i.e.*, Christian] parents out of covenant with God, and out of all church-relation, or those that admit them to both, give the more comfortable hopes of conversion to them. We say that they are not only under a *providential capacity* of conversion, as mere heathens are, but they are under a *covenant capacity*, because within that number to whom the promises of renewing grace belong.

"But, are there not promises of *converting grace* made to the *heathen* world? How, then, can it be true that promises of converting grace belong only to church-members? Very well; except you can make it appear that those scriptures come under the *proper notion* of *promises* made to them who are the persons mentioned in them. For my part, I look on them rather as *prophecies* of the conversion of the Gentiles than promises; or, if *promises* at all, yet promises directed to the Jews *concerning* the Gentiles.

"I have something more to say concerning the *prayers of the Church*. Are the prayers of the Church any *means* tending to the furtherance of *conversion*, or no? Yes, undoubtedly; for if the effectual prayer of *one* righteous man avail much, if it be fervent, as James saith, surely the prayers of *many* righteous men, *assembled in Christ's name*, must needs be far *more prevalent*. Although the Church pray for *all men* according to the command, (1 Tim. ii. 1,) yet those that are *most upon their hearts* in their prayers are those of the *same flock and fold* with themselves. Accordingly, I make no question, but that in the inmost desires of all true Christians the conversion of those that are *nearest* related, whether in natural or *Christian* bonds, is most passionately wished for; and, by consequence, the little ones born in the Church, the hope of the derivation of Christ's kingdom to succeeding generations. So that those principles that will not allow such persons a standing in the Church, do what they can to disinterest them in the very *cream and marrow* of the whole Church's prayers."*

On the whole, I would observe concerning the *external means*

* Ford's Dialogue, part ii., pp. 38-49.

of conversion, that there is a certain *order* of means, divinely instituted, whereby our *desires* and our *endeavours* ought to be *regulated*. By a presumptuous disregard of this *order*, we are in danger of *tempting* God. For instance, if the *conversion of the heathen* be the subject, order requires that the *first step* in our prayers and attempts should be that God, by His *providence*, would open an entrance, an effectual door, for His gospel to be sent to them in purity and power; that the Lord would convert them by sending them first the *means* of conversion. A *second step* in order is, that a dispensation of mercy may be *established* among them; that they may be brought into a church-state, and have the ministration of the word and ordinances as *a people*. A *third gradation* which divinely-instituted order requires is, that we desire the *grace* of the means may be communicated, and that souls may be converted to God, made to receive Christ, justified and sanctified in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God. This order is beautifully described by St Paul:—"Whosoever shall *call* upon the name of the Lord shall be *saved*. How then shall they *call* on him in whom they have not *believed?* and how shall they *believe* in him of whom they have not *heard?* and how shall they *hear* without a *preacher?* and how shall they *preach* except they be *sent?*" (Rom. x. 13–15.) He does not, I apprehend, argue the absolute impossibility of salvation to any but in this exact mode, but he shews which is the *appointed plan of means* which we are to regard. In like manner, if the *conversion of our children* be the subject, order requires that we should *first* desire and use our influence in bringing them into a *church-state*. They are born under a dispensation of grace; in *that respect* they are not *unclean*, but *holy;* nothing but our avowed rejection of Christianity can deprive them of that privilege. But none can be deemed of the *visible Church* regularly without *initiation* by baptism. This is the instituted porch to the temple of means. To desire and make use of *subsequent* means, while that which is *initiatory* is not used, is *irregular* and presumptuous. A *second step* in the Divine plan is, that I should seek from the God of means a blessing *in their use:* the conversion of my children *as partakers* of the means, and not *without* them. For me to desire grace for my child for conversion, and yet deny him any of the *means* of grace of which he is a capable subject, is unscriptural, disorderly, and preposterous. As, therefore, I desire his *conver-*

sion, let me observe the *order of means* leading thereto; and oh that I may never be found remiss, while *using* the means, in seeking their *end!* And that the important end of *conversion* may be regularly sought, and is peculiarly favoured by *infant baptism*, will further appear, if we observe—

§ 21. (2.) That the practice of baptizing infants (*cat. par.*) may furnish a parent with many *convincing* considerations and arguments, in pleading with his child with a view to his conversion, which otherwise he could not so well urge.

"My dear child," may he say, "thou art a sinner from thy birth, guilty and polluted. This thy baptism teaches. In baptism, God shews and testifies that He will forgive sins; and this is one reason why thou hast been baptized, because thou art a sinner, standing in need of spiritual washing. Thou art not to think that the water of baptism takes away sin, that is, pardons and makes thee pure in soul; no, no, it only shews thee plainly that thou *wantest* this pardon and purity; and it also shews, that God is merciful and willing to give thee every good thing in this life and in the world to come, on thy coming to Him. He says in His *word*, that He will give grace and glory,—that those who seek Him early, that is, when young as thou art, shall find Him; and Christ says He will in nowise cast out any poor sinner that cometh to Him. But thy baptism shews *still more plainly* that thou art guilty, and that God is merciful; that thou art impure, that is, unfit to go to heaven, but that God is willing, on thy coming to Him, to cleanse thee and to make thee meet for heaven. My dear child, learn this, and strive to understand it without delay. If thou diest without repentance—how shall I speak it?—thou must perish for ever. No one goes to heaven without pardon, and thou must not expect to go there without repentance. And, oh, remember that not only the Bible, the Sabbaths, the sermons, the prayers, and the advices thou hast from me and others, will rise up against thee, if thou continuest impenitent, but also thy *baptism*, in the day of judgment.

"Observe again, my dear child; though you go with me to worship the great and good God, to His house of prayer on the Lord's day,—and though you are always present at our family devotion,—though you never take the holy name of God in vain, as many naughty children do, nor do of a Sabbath-day as they do; yet this is not enough to give you a title to heaven. This is very good in

its place; as also to honour your parents, to behave properly to your superiors, school-mates, and all people. 'To order yourself lowly and reverently to all your betters; to hurt nobody in word or deed; to be true and just in all your dealings; to bear no malice nor hatred in your heart; to keep your hands from picking and stealing; and your tongue from evil-speaking, lying, and slandering.' These things, I say, are very right. But the best of men do them very imperfectly; and except we have a better title to heaven than this, we can by no means be saved. Now, observe, because we could not keep God's holy law perfectly, He sent His Son, Jesus Christ, into the world to keep it perfectly in our stead, that by our believing in Him we should not perish, but have everlasting life. This your baptism teaches; for St Paul says, that to be baptized into Christ, signifies to *put on* Christ,—that is, that He is our worthiness, our perfection, our righteousness. This is one of those very important truths that your baptism testifies and seals. Oh, then, my dear child, bring thy poor, perishing self to Jesus Christ! He will not put thee off, for He has declared He won't. He went through every state, from infancy to manhood; and having been a child Himself when in the world, He receives children. Oh the happiness He has to give! He will not only keep thee from hell, but at death take thee to heaven. He alone can make thee truly good; I cannot. Nobody on earth can. But Jesus Christ, being Himself divinely good and gracious, can make us good; yes, He can and will make thee so, on coming to Him with all thy heart. This thou mayest be as sure of as that thou art baptized. For baptism according to the will of Christ is a seal for confirmation. You know, my dear, that what an *honest man* confirms by *sealing* it, he will stand by. Much more so will our gracious Lord and Saviour. Sensible of thy sinful and helpless condition, with the assistance of Divine grace, and with a contrite heart, pray unto this merciful Redeemer in some such words as these:—'O Lord God, who alone canst save me from sin and the wrath to come, accept the prayers and the cries of a helpless child. No one on earth or in heaven but Thyself, O Lord most merciful, can help me. I am destroyed by sin, the *sin of my heart* especially, but my help is from Thee. Accept me in Christ, whose nature and life were perfectly holy, and who is made wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption, to all Thy children. Oh that as I

have been baptized with water, I may also be baptized with the Holy Ghost! And as this was signified and sealed by my baptism, grant it me, O Lord God, for Christ's sake. Amen.'"

§ 22. Fifth, Am I the *parent* of baptized children? Then let me improve their baptism, for the purpose of inculcating upon them Christian *tempers*. Let me remind them, that to answer the great ends of our baptism is the same as to be *true Christians;* to have that mind which was in Christ Jesus, a disinterested, humble, loving, and liberal disposition; to live and walk as He would have them, by faith and not by sense. Baptism, like Christianity itself, points them to a penitent frame of mind; to a resolute opposition, by grace, to youthful lusts and the whole body of sin; to heavenly-mindedness and firm attachment to Christ. (See Chap. II., §§ 18–21.)

§ 23. Sixth, As a *parent* let me improve the baptism of my children for the purpose of promoting in them a due regard to *relative* duties. As their baptism introduces them into a state of *new relationship*, it requires answerable duties. As baptized ones, as Christians in name and calling, let me often remind them of the apostolic exhortations, which are often founded on the same consideration. Let them be exhorted to be meek and peaceable, and even to follow peace with all men, as well as holiness; to do good to all as they have opportunity, and especially the most serious and deserving. And oh, with the bowels of a parent, with the integrity, watchfulness, concern, and impartiality of a Christian, let me look diligently, as far as in me lies, "lest any of them fail of the grace of God, lest any root of bitterness, springing up, breed trouble and defile others;" lest there be any revengeful Cain, immodest Ham, profane Esau, or proud Absalom. And let me enforce all duties, and especially *relative* ones, from the apostle Paul's grand consideration, (Heb. xii. 22–25:)—That, in visibility and *covenant-relation*, "they are come unto mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the *general assembly* and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to [the same *general relation* with] the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than the blood of Abel." In a word, may I improve their baptism to promote a conversation becoming the gospel of Christ.

§ 24. (*Fourth,*) Am I a minister of the gospel? How should I *dread* the thought of withholding water from those whom Christ owns as the subjects of His kingdom; how *ready* to benefit those who are so capable and suitable subjects of such a benefit; with what *solemnity* discharge this branch of ministerial commission; with what *closeness,* plainness, and fidelity, address, on this occasion, the parents of the baptized child; how, in improving infant baptism, *concur* with parents, for the aforementioned purposes, in private and public!

§ 25. First, How should I *dread* the thought of withholding water from those whom Christ owns as the subjects of His kingdom! Let me remember, that Christ severely *rebuked* His disciples for their keeping of little children from being *brought to Him.* Are they not as *capable* of the main end of baptism as the Jewish infants were of the principal design of circumcision? Do they not answer the scriptural requisition of necessary qualifications, such as are perfectly *suitable* to the nature and design of Christian baptism? If so, I am not guiltless while I keep out of Christ's fold, as far as in me lies, those whom He is willing to receive as the lambs of His visible flock.*

§ 26. Second, How *ready* should I be to benefit those who are thus qualified, by cheerfully obeying the call to baptize them! When I receive a child into the visible Church, I am not only executing the will and pleasure of Christ, but *imitating* His tender compassion towards children, whom He ever treated as church-members. What readiness should I discover in gathering the lambs with my arms, in bringing them to the arms of my Saviour, and *their* Saviour, who has promised to carry them in His bosom! Delightful task! not only "to rear the tender mind, and teach the young idea how to shoot," but also to *enter* the infant mind into the school of Him who can qualify the youngest child that breathes for heavenly and sublime enjoyments! Pleasing thought! that every time I baptize a child, I am adding to the number of Christ's visible subjects, many of whom, no doubt, are taken to His

* "Some pious persons professedly declare that they dare not baptize an infant upon a dogmatical faith in the parents, and I cannot but profess that, being fairly called to it, I should *tremble at the guilt* of refusing it. I should as soon be brought to strip them of their *houses,* or *inheritances,* devolved upon them from such parents, to take the bread out of their mouths, as to debar them of this their *birth-privilege.*"—*Mr Thomas Blake, in a Preface to Dr Ford's Dialogue concerning the Practical Use of Infant Baptism.*

heavenly kingdom, where alone they can have an opportunity of acknowledging the mercy and faithfulness of their covenant God, and the compassionate care of their Divine Shepherd. And if many of them, growing up, will probably despise their birthright, like profane Esau; or betray (in a sense) their Lord and Master, like ungrateful Judas; or at least wound Him in the house of His friends by their disobedience; yet some, I may cheerfully hope, will be spared, and graciously disposed, to speak of the goodness of their heavenly Friend and Lord in the land of the living.

§ 27. Third, Am I as a gospel *minister* called to baptize infants? With what concern and *solemnity* ought I to discharge this branch of my ministerial commission! They are no less the purchase of my Saviour's blood than adults. His behaviour, in taking up infants in His arms to bless them, was marked with solemnity and holy reverence, no less than in preaching the gospel, or even raising the dead. They are no less the objects of the Father's everlasting love, or the subjects of His merciful dispensations than adults. The life and liberty, the misery and happiness, the loss or gain, the privileges and the reverse, of the *infant* part of mankind, are not less momentous than those of the adult, by the laws of heaven and earth. Why should not the Christian *divine*, as well as the civil magistrate, the lawyer or the judge, espouse the cause and transact the interesting business of infants with equal concern and solemnity as those of adults? Where the temporal welfare of a child is concerned, men do not say, "It is but the life or death, the property or privilege of an *infant*, therefore it is no matter how the business is done." Wherefore let me regard the covenant privileges of infants as truly *important*, and their baptismal dedication to God, who condescends to be present, sealing to them His deed of gift, a *solemn service*.

§ 28. Fourth, Am I called to officiate, on such an occasion, as a *minister?* With what *closeness*, plainness, and fidelity, should I address the spectators of the ordinance in general, old and young, and the parents of the baptized child in particular! What an opportunity is here afforded me of making a practical use of the scriptural and interesting doctrines of original sin,—covenant mercy through Christ,—justifying, regenerating, and cleansing grace,—our absolute need of Christ, and the Holy Spirit's influence,—the privilege of adoption into the family of the great and gracious God,—every covenant-blessing therein exhibited, and

every obligation thence resulting! What a favourable opportunity of exhorting the parents to bring them up for God, in the nurture and admonition of the Lord,—to pray for them, and devote them to Him *constantly*,—to provide for their welfare, not only their temporal but also their eternal welfare, as God, even *their* God, evidently has provided, by His providence and covenant,—to improve, in behalf of their children, as well as for themselves, those means of grace to which baptism is an instituted and explicit introduction,—to stand prepared to resign them, if soon called for by death, without repining,—to consider themselves as underteachers in the school of Christ, whose pupils are their own children,—to watch over them and study their proficiency, that they may be qualified betimes for the higher class of congregational fellowship.

§ 29. Fifth, As a Christian *minister*, let me embrace favourable opportunities to *concur* with the parents of baptized children in improving their baptism, in public and private. And is there not a pressing call to this on account of the great ignorance of many Christian parents respecting the very nature and design, blessings and obligations of this Christian rite? I cannot help thinking that were it *rightly understood*, few or none would part with it from a *conscientious* scruple; or make so little use of it as a moral means of promoting real Christianity. Are not Christian families and societies in as great danger of losing sight of the true end of baptism, as Jewish ones were in regard of circumcision and other external rites? Let me therefore endeavour to inform the judgments, and direct the pious efforts of all as I have opportunity, and especially those heads of families with whom I am connected that require most assistance.

§ 30. (*Fifth*,) As a SPECTATOR of infant baptism, let me not *mock*, lest my bands be made strong, but rather admire the *Divine goodness* towards infants,—*cordially assent* to the solemn obligations my own (if the subject of it) has laid me under,—regard the occasion as a solemn and seasonable *memento*,—wonder at the conduct of such as *tear off the seal* from the Divine charter,—consider how *blessed* those are who partake of the things signified.

§ 31. First, Let me beware of all appearance of irreverence, indecency, and much more of *mockery*. "Now therefore, be ye not mockers," saith the Lord God of hosts, "lest your bands be made strong," (Isa. xxviii. 22.) None but *fools* can be guilty of

such things. Nor is the caution useless, seeing it is foretold that the *professors of the last times should be mockers*, (Jude 18.) Such need no other evidence of their being the children of the *bond-woman*. (See Gen. xxi. 9, 10.) "Whispering, and laughing, and other irreverences of behaviour, at this ordinance, are a provocation to God, an affront to the institution, a disturbance to others, and a bad sign of a vain and carnal mind."*

§ 32. Second, Let me admire the *Divine goodness* towards infants. How illustriously do the *sovereignty* of His love, the *freeness* of His grace, the *all-sufficiency* of the Redeemer's righteousness *without works*, appear in the baptism of infants! What can they bring to Christ for acceptance? and yet they are received. How helpless, and yet accepted! What an emblem is this child of weakness, want, and unworthiness! and yet Divine goodness does not overlook, nay, the arms of mercy embrace it. How is human merit for ever discountenanced! For greater love and compassion does Jesus possess towards that tender babe than its joyous and fond parents.

§ 33. Third, Am I a *spectator* of this rite, so expressive of human indigence and Divine bounty? so striking a display of the creature's absolute dependence and high privilege? Let me *cordially assent* to the important benefits and solemn obligations which my own (if the favoured subject of it) has laid me under. Whether I assent or no, the vows of God are upon me. God's just requisitions are more binding than all the vows in the world beside.

§ 34. Fourth, Am I a *spectator* of this ordinance? How should every such occasion be a solemn and seasonable *memento* respecting human unworthiness and sovereign grace! O my soul, what hast thou to boast of? Remember the rock from whence thou wert hewn: how humbling the thought of thy original! No sooner did I breathe the vital air, than "the seeds of sin sprung up for death." Naturally helpless, (more so than most animals,) and morally defiled, is the most distinguished of mortals. Royal blood is contaminated with sin; all the care and attendance of a palace have no tendency to remove the guilt and pollution even of its infant inhabitant. But, oh the benignity and rich grace of that God whose mercy beams forth not less on the poor cottage than the sumptuous palace! "Who is like unto the Lord our God,

* Henry's Treatise on Baptism, p. 263.

who dwelleth on high, who humbleth himself to behold the things that are in heaven, and in the earth! He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth the needy out of the dunghill; that he may set him with princes, even the princes of his people. He maketh the barren woman to keep house, and to be a joyful mother of children. Praise ye the Lord," (Ps. cxiii. 5–9.)

In beholding that infant, let me be reminded *how* the kingdom of heaven is to be received. As a *free gift* bestowed on the *undeserving*. If ever I be admitted into the kingdom of glory, I must enter first into the kingdom of grace. And as the subject of grace I am *passive* in the hand of mercy. How just and holy the *requisitions* of the Supreme *Governor;* and yet how beholden to the *sovereignty of grace* if received to celestial bliss! Let me not be ignorant or forgetful of this mystery, "lest I be wise in my own conceit." "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways" *of mercy* "past finding out! Who hath first given to him, and it shall be recompensed to him again? For of him, through him, and to him, are all things: to whom be glory for ever. Amen," (Rom. xi. 33-36.)

§ 35. Fifth, How do they *mutilate* the design of Christianity who *tear off the seal* from the Divine charter! What! do any begrudge to their children and posterity the external evidences with which Christianity is recommended? God condescends to confirm His charter with His seal, as an *additional evidence* to every subject of His kingdom, that He is and will be true and faithful to His word of promise; as a perpetual *motive* and encouragement to turn to God and live. Let me, therefore, never, without a Divine injunction, imitate a conduct which *mutilates* the motives to faith, to repentance, to happiness in a covenant God; as that which denies baptism to children does. Are the following words, in reference to this conduct, too strong?—"If any should set upon a design *to undo all* that by commission from Christ in many nations of the world is happily done, there could not, I believe, *a more ready way* than this be found to effect it; though those that take it in hand are far from any such design in it."* On the contrary, I cannot help thinking that the following words of Dr Owen, concerning a *weekly day of holy rest* (*mutatis mutandis*) may be fitly applied to the practice of *infant baptism*:—

* Blake's Preface to Dr Ford's Dialogue.

"Amongst all the outward means of conveying to the *present generation* that religion which was at first taught and delivered unto men by Jesus Christ and His apostles, there hath been none more effectual than the catholic uninterrupted observation of such a" *rite.**

§ 36. Sixth, How *blessed* are those who participate of the things signified by this ordinance! They are born, not only of *water*, but also of the *Spirit*. They are justified freely by grace, and purified by the blood of Christ. They have the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost. The covenant of grace, not only in its external administration, but in its internal efficacy, has found them out, and made them the favoured recipients of the *subjective* love of the Father, grace of the Son, and fellowship of the Spirit. To have the light of gospel day, and glorious truths exhibited to view, must needs be inestimable privileges; but to receive from the same beneficent, everlasting Source of good, eyes to behold, ears to hear, hands to receive, and a heart to improve these blessings, how inconceivably great the privilege! O Lord, "what is man that thou art *thus* mindful of him? and the son of man that thou *thus* visitest him?" How desirable, then, the BAPTISM OF THE HOLY GHOST! Oh that I may be found the happy, happy subject of it, according to the promise, "He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost!" May I constantly breathe after this blessing, until the apostolic prayer be answered in me, (Eph. iii. 16–19,) "That he would grant me," and all His children, "according to the riches of his glory, to be strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man; that Christ may dwell in my heart by faith; that I, being rooted and grounded in love," —love to God who first loved me, and the unfeigned love of the brethren, as well as unlimited benevolence to all mankind—"may be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth and height; and to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that I might be FILLED WITH ALL THE FULNESS OF GOD." *Amen.*

§ 37. Thus have we attempted to shew—(Chap. I.) That the *notion* of Mr B. and other Antipædobaptists concerning *positive institutions* and *inferential reasoning*, when applied to the ordinance of *baptism*, is untenable;—(Chap. II.) That the general

* Exercitations on the Sabbath; Preface. [Edinburgh Ed., vol. ii. of Exp. of Ep. to the Heb., p. 263.]

nature and use of baptism is to *exhibit* and *confirm* the blessings of the covenant, as the *seal* of God, affixed to His own merciful grant;—(Chap. III.) That it is the *will of Christ* that the infants of believing, or Christian parents should be baptized;—(Chap. IV.) That the words *baptize* and *baptism* are *generic terms*, comprehending different specific modes of application;—(Chap. V.) We have also answered the most capital *objections* and *evasions* of our opponents;—and (Chap. VI.) endeavoured to point out some important *practical uses* of Paedobaptism. From the whole I venture to deduce this concluding corollary, viz.:—

Coroll.—That infant baptism is not only agreeable to the will of Christ, but also is, in its own nature, of a very *useful, practical tendency.*

As this work was not undertaken or prosecuted with a view to foster a *party spirit*, but to promote the *union of Christians;* not so much to maintain a *tenet*, as to investigate *truth;* not to promote the honour of a particular denomination, but to subserve, with His blessing, the glory of God our Saviour; I now humbly dedicate the whole to the DIVINE INSTITUTOR, being firmly persuaded that He will accept it, however imperfect, as a *Defence of Truth*—"a work of faith and labour of love."

APPENDIX,

CONTAINING

AN EXAMINATION OF SOME OBJECTIONS ADVANCED BY MR BOOTH, IN THE SECOND EDITION OF HIS "PÆDOBAPTISM EXAMINED."

APPENDIX.

§ 1. Introduction. § 2. (First,) The first class of objections about the *mode*. Passages objected to. § 3. Mr B.'s exordium retorted. § 4. His seeming denial, that learned men are divided in their judgment about the term baptism, unreasonable and contrary to plain fact. § 5–15. Objections answered. § 16–30. (Second,) The second class of objections about the *subjects* answered.

§ 1. Some time after Mr B. published his *first* edition of "Pædobaptism Examined," I published a new edition of Mr Morrice's "Social Religion Exemplified," with *Notes;* in which notes I dropped a few remarks, as occasion offered, on the subjects and mode of baptism, and took notice, with due respect, of Mr B.'s publication. In his *second* edition, greatly enlarged, he takes particular notice of my observations. Now, though I think he has not brought one objection of plausible force, which is not virtually and fairly answered in the preceding pages, yet since he has honoured my remarks with a pretty close attention, and at some length, it may be expected that a more express and direct reply be made to his principal exceptions.

It may be necessary also to observe, that the Rev. John Horsey had published, after Mr B.'s *first* edition came out, a Sermon entitled, "Infant Baptism Stated and Defended." This discourse and one of my notes containing expressions of a similar tendency, Mr B. takes occasion to introduce us together, like brother tradesmen of the same *firm*, thus:—"Messrs Williams and Horsey," or "Messrs Horsey and Williams."* His first class of objections refers to the *mode*.

§ 2. (First,) I had expressed myself (Social Religion, p. 131)

* Pædobaptism Examined, vol. i., pp. 104, 105, &c.

as follows:—"As the most eminent critics, commentators, and lexicographers are divided in their verdict respecting the acceptation of the verb *baptizo*, and consequently the intention of our Saviour's command to *baptize;* and as the *practice* of the disciples, whence we should gather in what sense they understood it, is attended with considerable difficulty, when reduced to any one invariable method; we should vary it according to circumstances, and, in proportion as demonstrable evidence is wanting, refer the mode to the private judgment of the person or persons concerned." Mr Horsey had observed, (Infant Baptism Stated and Defended, pp. 15–17, 2d Ed.) that the word *baptism* is "an equivocal, open, general term;"—that nothing is determined by it further than this, "that water should be applied to the subject in some form or other;"—that "the mode of use" is "only the ceremonial part of a positive institute; just as in the supper of our Lord, the time of day, the number and posture of communicants, the quality and quantity of bread and wine, are circumstances not accounted essential by any party of Christians;"—that "sprinkling, pouring, and plunging are perfectly equivalent, equally valid;"—and that, "if our Lord had designed to confine His followers to a particular mode, exclusive of all others," He would hardly have used "an open general term, (*βαπτίζω,*)" but "a word decided and limited in its import." He adds:—"The Greek language would have furnished him with terms indisputably precise and exact. Of this kind have been reckoned, and I think properly, *καταβυθίζω, καταποντίζω, καταδύνω,* or *καταδύω,* not to say *δύπτω* and *βυθίζω.*" This was what we honestly exposed to the public eye, and Mr B. employs his plausible pen for about *forty pages* in depreciating our commodity.

§ 3. In general, by way of exordium, he represents them as *strange things.* "Such are the views," says our opponent, "and such is the language of Messrs Williams and Horsey: to whom I may say, as the Athenians to Paul, 'You bring certain *strange things* to our ears; we would therefore know what these things mean.'" * In reply to this, in general, we cheerfully inform our querist, and all whom it concerns, that, with Paul, we care not how *strange* these things may sound in the ears of our opposers, provided they be *true* things. We moreover add, in the language of that noble champion with whom we are honourably classed, *mutatis*

* Pædobaptism Examined, p. 105.

mutandis, "Ye *Antipædobaptists*, we perceive that in all *these* things ye are too superstitious." However, let us proceed to particulars:—

§ 4. I had asserted, "that the most eminent writers are *divided* about the acceptation of the term *baptizo*." This position Mr B. seems not to allow. But is it not truly astonishing that this adept in baptismal researches makes the least hesitation respecting a *fact* so notorious that he who runs may read it? If my position be not just, it must be owing to either of these two things: that Mr B. on behalf of himself and fraternity rejects the compliment therein designed them, as being in the number of the *most eminent* writers; or else, that "the greatest men that ever filled the professor's chair, or adorned the Protestant pulpit," are a set of *ignoramuses* or *downright hypocrites*. If he does not choose to abide by either of these consequences, he is obliged to admit the force of my position. For what can be more evident, on the one hand, than that Mr B., the Doctors Stennett, Gill, Gale, &c., contend that the term in question signifies *only* and *exclusively* to *dip*; and, on the other, that a far greater number of the most eminent Pædobaptists strenuously affirm that a subject on whom water is *poured* or *sprinkled* is properly baptized. Is not this a *divided* opinion? Nay, can any two propositions be more contradictory than these: a subject sprinkled *is* baptized; and, a subject sprinkled *is not* baptized? The one party contends that baptism is a *generic* term, the other that it is a *specific* term. Now, those who hold the term to be a *genus*, denoting a ceremonial purification by water, must, of course, allow that *dipping* agrees with their definition. And so does *affusion*. And what is the inference? That a great number of the most eminent writers, and not a few of those produced by Mr B. in favour of his hypothesis, differ *essentially* from all the patrons of the *essentiality* of dipping in baptism.

Our author's *most weighty* objections, as they appear to me, may be arranged in the following manner:—

§ 5. (First,) His first *objection* is, that our account of the word *baptizo*, if true, "would greatly impeach the legislative character of Jesus Christ."* To this I reply, that such methods of vindicating the legislative character of Jesus Christ that discover so fond a predilection for hypothesis as to fly in the face of *stubborn facts*, seem more officious than solid, and better adapted to make

* Ibid.

and confirm infidels than to reflect honour on the Legislator. The "*ambiguity* we speak of" we apprehend to be *fact;* and whatever our Lord enacted in fact is acknowledged to have been from *design;* and whatever He designed therein must be holy, just, and good, as *all His* laws are. It therefore follows, that our *ambiguity* (if this term must be palmed upon us) is such as excludes all *real defect.* But let Mr B. know that we do not suppose, nor will admit, that there is *nothing certain* to be gathered from the term. And let him further know, that all the *uncertainty* we acknowledge begins precisely at the point where he and we *differ.* Our worthy friend must allow, that to *baptize* imports *a religious use of water;* so far we *agree.* But he goes *further,* and contends that *plunging* in water is *essential* to the term; in this we *differ.*

In hopes of *narrowing* rather than widening the difference between us and our brethren, I proposed "to *vary* the method according to circumstances:" for instance, if any through a conscientious scruple *preferred* immersion for their children, or for themselves, if not baptized before, that for peace's sake we comply. This was proposed from a principle of tenderness to well-meaning persons who thought for themselves. And it was also suggested as a way of manifesting a liberal impartiality. But this well-meant, conciliating plan seems to have excited my opponent's peculiar displeasure. The manner in which this idea has been received makes me, though reluctant, to infer that the more moderate and candid our attempts are for a friendly accommodation, the more shall we be resisted, except the conversion be complete.

§ 6. (Second,) Our author again objects:—"Our Lord gave a command *to baptize;* by which it is universally understood that He designed the performance of *a single action;* for nobody supposes that sprinkling, pouring, and plunging must all be *united* to constitute baptism."* But who does not see that this is a mere quibble? Now, in *what sense* does this law require *a single act* of obedience? It seems in this—that sprinkling, pouring, and plunging are *not all united* to constitute baptism, but must be *used* singly. But does my opponent mean to substitute this sophistical shuffling of terms for argument? Does not every generic term *necessarily* terminate in *a single action,* as the terms to *purify,* to *anoint,* to *consecrate,* to *sanctify,* to *proselyte,* to *teach,* to *wash,* &c.? Yet no one will say that such a term is specifically *limited*

* Pædobaptism Examined, p. 107.

to one action, so that it is the *only* action that could have been used. The objection has no force, but in proportion as the objector begs the question in debate—viz., that the command *to baptize* requires a *single act* of obedience in such a sense that it *could not* have terminated upon any *other* specifically different. It is, therefore, incumbent on him to prove, if he can, (for this he has not done *hitherto,*) that *βαπτίζω excludes* every idea but that of dipping, in its legislative meaning. Nor is he thereby called to prove a negative; for the question being about the acceptation of a word, and eight out of ten critics, to speak within moderate bounds, are against him, it remains for him to prove them either *incompetent judges,* or *abandoned rebels* against the authority of Christ, before his point can be established.

§ 7. (Third,) Another objection is, "That to suppose *baptism* to be a general term, is to impute to the Divine command such *obscurity* as is incompatible with the general *principles of law,* especially a positive law." Hence we are reminded, that "a law *designedly obscure* is fitted for nothing so much as to multiply crimes and punishments. Such a law is *unjust* and *cruel;* consequently, could not proceed from our Divine Sovereign."* To this we reply:—

(1.) That a law *designedly obscure,* without any penal sanction, is the most innocent thing in the world. If it argues anything bad in the legislator, it is *folly,* not cruelty and injustice.

(2.) Our opponent must allow, that it is not only possible, but a *real fact,* that the best of laws, human and Divine, are indeterminate, or *obscure* (if you please) in *some respects,* while they are sufficiently explicit in *others.* What a wise legislator *intends* should be understood and complied with, he will make sufficiently clear and determinate; but what is not so, does not, properly speaking, make a part of the statute. And this is eminently the case in those laws that are called *positive.*

In perfect consistence with this remark, we regard the law of baptism. We are *certain* it implies a *ceremonial purification by water;* but see no reason to conclude, that it signifies *immersion exclusively.* While, then, we consider the last idea as *uncertain,* or rather *very obscure,* it is no part of our duty to comply with it. As far as the law is plain, it claims obedience; but as far as it is indeterminate, it leaves the subject free. Therefore, as far as the

* Ibid., p. 106.

essentiality of dipping does not appear in the Divine mandate, we are right in opposing this Baptist principle as a species of will-worship. Let any use dipping, and that invariably, in *preference* to any other mode, but do not make that *essential* to the ordinance, and we have no controversy with them. We have to do only with those who make that a part of binding authority which our Lord has left *designedly obscure.* A *wise* legislator, in proportion as he would have his laws understood and obeyed, will enact them in a plain and determinate manner: Jesus Christ is such a lawgiver; but as Mr B.'s import of the term appears to, by far, the greatest number of competent judges *very obscure,* the inference is plain—the essentiality of dipping in baptizing was never intended by Christ to be a part of *His law.* We do not say, "that such a law should be exploded as *obsolete;*" but that "in regard to us it *never was promulged.*" For "can it be supposed that our Lord would give a positive law of Divine worship, a law that is obligatory on the most illiterate of His real disciples, in the very first stage of their Christian profession, and yet express it in such *ambiguous* language, that the most wise and eminent of all His followers cannot now understand it." He that can believe it, let him.

§ 8. Aristotle well observes, that "those things are *probable* that appear so to *all,* to *the most,* or to *the wise;* and to *all* these, to *most* of them, or to those who are best known, and reputable."* If this be a true *criterion,* may we not venture to say, that *probably* our Lord *never enacted* what Mr B. contends for—viz., that every idea but that of immersion is *excluded* from the Christian rite in question; or if He did intend it, that it is left *very obscure?* Again:—"Baron Montesquieu observes, 'The style [of laws] should be *plain* and *simple;* a direct expression being always better understood than an indirect one. It is an essential article that the words of the law should [be adapted to] excite in everybody the same ideas.'"† If these remarks be conformable to the true *spirit of laws,* we again insist that Mr B.'s hypothesis was never divinely enjoined. "For to what purpose is a law considered as obligatory, when the most learned, sagacious, and impartial

* Ἐνδόξα δὲ, τὰ δοκουντα πᾶσιν, ἢ τοῖς πλείστοις, ἢ τοῖς σοφοῖς· καὶ τουτοις, ἢ τοῖς πᾶσιν, ἢ τοῖς πλείστοις, ἢ τοῖς μάλιστα γνωξιμοις, καὶ ἐνδοξοις.—*Aristot. Topic.,* lib. i., cap. i., § 7.

† Spirit of Laws, book xxix., chap. xvi.; and Pædobaptism Examined, vol. i., p. 105.

cannot understand it?" It is plain, "no positive law is obligatory till promulged: in other words, it is not a *law*. For what is meant by the term *law*, but *a rule of action* prescribed by sovereign authority? It cannot, however, be a rule of action, any further than it is made known." Agreeable to this is the following language of Sir William Blackstone:—"A bare resolution confined in the breast of the legislator, without manifesting itself by some external sign, can never be properly *a law*. It is requisite that this resolution be notified to the people who are to obey it."* Hence it follows, by Aristotle's rule, that the *essentiality of dipping* in Christian baptism has not, with regard to us, been promulged. "If the trumpet gives an *uncertain* sound, it is all one as if it were *not sounded*." But we entreat of Mr B. not to forget that we speak of a want of *clearness*, and consequently *non-obligation*, only with respect to that very point wherein he and we, and, I may add, he and most of his Pædobaptist witnesses *differ*—viz., that βαπτίζω in the New Testament, that is, in the ceremonial and sacramental sense of it, *absolutely excludes* all other modes of purification but that of immersion.

§ 9. (Fourth,) It is again urged, "That supposing the word *baptism*, in different connexions, is used in *various* acceptations,—such as *immersion*, *washing*, *pouring*, and *sprinkling*,—yet that is not a sufficient reason for pronouncing the word *equivocal*. Otherwise we shall find comparatively but few terms in any language that are not equivocal and of dubious meaning." On this I would observe:—

That all *generic* terms in the laws of God and men must *necessarily* be equivocal and dubious, so far as we contend with respect to the term baptism—viz., that they do not fix the *mode* of action; as contradistinguished from those of determinate specification. Terms being reducible to this twofold distribution, it is evident that a *wise* legislator will use one or the other sort according to the *design* he has in view. If he means to require of his subjects the performance of a duty in a certain *specific manner*, he will employ *specific terms*. Thus if our Lord's design had been, in the case before us, to enjoin the Christian purification by water in the way of *sprinkling exclusively*, we should have had a word conveying that idea; or *perfusion exclusively*, the term would have

* Comment., vol. i., Introd., § ii.; and Pædobaptism Examined, vol. i., pp. 106, 107.

been accordingly; or *plunging exclusively*, the expression would have been such as could agree, in the connexion where found, with no other action. If the language in which the law is promulged does not afford such a word as absolutely confines the subject to one specific action, the remedy lies easy in a circumlocution, or an explanatory clause. If the duty, *in general*, be required, without specifying the manner of performance, it is evident that the subject is *designedly* left at liberty to adopt any manner in which the general duty may be performed. And positive duties being no further enjoined than they are made known, it is plain that the *law of nature*, or some *prior revelation*, is our guide, where the former is not excludingly restrictive.

Let us suppose, for illustration's sake, that God, by one of His prophets, should of old enact, that all the priests in the holy land were to PURIFY *by water* all the families of Israel on a certain day, as preparatory to some solemn transaction. The mandate goes forth, and the advantages connected with compliance are clearly signified. Accordingly, the obedient priests and tribes observe the Divine signal; and immediately turn their attention to *the manner* of doing what is thus indefinitely commanded. Some observe that the *manner* is very *immaterial*, for this plain reason, that no *particular mode* of purification by water was specified. They also observe, that religious purification by water was wont to be performed either by *washing the whole body*, or by *sprinkling* it only. Some therefore are purified by *one mode*, and some by *another;* the *design* of the law is equally answered by each, and the Lawgiver is well pleased. But there are some in the land who take it into their heads, that by the phrase *purify by water* is meant *spiritual* purity, and reject the idea of *material* water. Others, who fixed upon the mode of *washing the whole body* in some river or bath, reckoned their neighbours, who adopted that of *sprinkling water on the body*, or a *part* of the body, yet *unclean;* and thus argued, "This purification is an emblem of moral purity, which Jehovah requires in all that approach Him; now that purity must be either partial or complete. Not the former, our neighbours themselves being judges. It must, therefore, be the latter. Of perfect purity, then, this purification is either an *expressive* emblem, or it is not. If not, why such a ritual service appointed in preference to any other that might have exhibited the blessing in a far more striking point of light? Besides, the command to *purify* by water must

intend the performance of a *single action*; and to suppose it means either *this, that,* or the *other,* must proceed from the *designed* obscurity of the law itself; and such a law is fitted for nothing so much as to multiply crimes and punishments; nay, such a law is unjust and cruel; consequently, could not proceed from our Divine Sovereign." The others reply:—"We admit yours to be valid, and only claim from you the same indulgence; you know that *both* modes have been long in use, and the law does not specify either. Had *your* mode been *essential,* or had it been exclusively *designed* by our Great Sovereign, He would have taken care to inform us of it. But since He has not, we are *unreasonably* compelled by your act of uniformity. Besides, Jehovah himself has appointed the mode of sprinkling as an emblem of moral purifying, and pronounces the persons so purified '*clean.*'" I ask common sense, whether there is anything unreasonable in such a law? And whether the conduct of the former party be not strongly marked with rigid, unreasonable singularity, notwithstanding their pretence of honouring the authority of the Lawgiver?

§ 10. (Fifth,) We are again asked, "In the name of common sense and common impartiality, why should that emphatical and enacting term *βαπτίζω* be singled out as remarkably *equivocal?* Why represented as *obscure* to such a degree, 'that the most eminent critics, commentators, and lexicographers are divided in their verdict about'—what? Its *primary* meaning? far from it. Here we think Mr Williams is under a gross mistake." In answer, I observe—

(1.) That the epithets *equivocal* and *obscure* are none of mine. Mr Horsey indeed says, that the word baptism is "an *equivocal,* open, general term;" nor is he singular in using the first of these three, for he might plead in his defence precedents of no mean rank. Two of these at present occur to remembrance, which I shall here insert. The first comes from the pen of Dr John Owen, one of the greatest divines the last century produced. Having quoted Mark i. 8, John i. 33, and Acts i. 5, he observes, "In every place it [the term *βαπτίζω*] either signifies to *pour,* or the expression is EQUIVOCAL."* The other example comes recommended by such a company of *literary critics* as stand in a high rank among the *literati* of the present age. The Monthly Re-

* Tract on Infant Baptism and Dipping, ap. Collec. of Serm., p. 581, [vol. xvi., p. 266, Edin. Edition of Works.]

viewers, who cannot be suspected of prejudice against immersion, as appears from their *Literary Journals,* much less can they be charged with notorious incapacity to form a judgment on the meaning of a Greek word, write thus:—"We cannot *wholly* subscribe to this opinion; [*i. e.*, that there must be an immersion to constitute baptism, whether that immersion be total or partial;] though we acknowledge there are many authorities to support it among the ancients. The word *baptize* doth certainly signify immersion, absolute and total immersion, in Josephus, and other Greek writers. But this word is in some degree EQUIVOCAL; and there are some *eminent Greek scholars* who have asserted that immersion is not *necessarily* included in baptism." After having made some critical observations, they add these remarkable words: —"We have not yet seen anything on this subject that hath *thoroughly satisfied* us."* Whether the present publication, if they shall think proper to read it, will contribute anything towards their "thorough satisfaction," is to me uncertain. Again—

(2.) Supposing I had said that the most eminent writers are divided about the *primary* meaning of the controverted term, I deny the charge of having been under a gross mistake; in support of which denial it would be easy to produce numerous instances. But to avoid repetitions, (*vide* Chap. IV., *passim*) I would only remark, that Mr B. and some others, on the one hand, consider the *primary* meaning to be *dipping,* or *putting in* water, &c.; and many of the first-rate critics, on the other hand, consider the *primary,* obvious, natural import to be *general,* as to *tinge,* to *wet,* to *wash,* &c. And that this is the real signification of it, even in a *primary philological* sense, I think has been fully proved. I say, "primary philological," because—

(3.) There is a manifest and important difference between a *primary philological* or etymological, and a *primary legal* meaning. The one by no means implies the other. On the contrary, we are fully of opinion with the learned Gussetius, who, when speaking of the two Hebrew roots *Mul* and *Namal,* very properly shews, and we think beyond all contradiction, that the Divine Legislator in enacting His laws has actually deviated from that very rule which Mr B. would have us believe is invariably observed and inviolably sacred. And this in the matter of a *positive law;* yes, that very law which enjoins the observance of what St Paul

* Monthly Review, vol. lxx., p. 396.

styles "a seal of the righteousness of faith." With the assistance of a certain ingenious writer, let us hear him speak in English, concerning these two Hebrew roots, thus:—"Though they do not occur in the conjugation Kal, except in the *sacramental* or typical signification of circumcising; yet this is not to be considered as their *primary*, but only as a species of their general signification of *cutting;* which, therefore, is their *proper* meaning. The genuine, general signification is to be fetched from Psalm xc. 6, and cxviii. 10."*

As a proof that it is not necessary the words of a Divine law should be interpreted according to their *primary* acceptation, we may further observe, with the translator of the above passage, that the word "*Arelah* is used for the *foreskin;* but its *general* and *leading* idea is, as Dr Taylor informs us, *a superfluous incumbrance;* and Mr Julius Bate says its PRIMARY meaning is, *the top,* or *protuberance.*"† To which we may add Mr Locke's remark:—"What words are there not used with *great latitude,* and with some deviation from their *strict* and *proper* significations,"‡ even in *Divine* laws? It does not, then, follow, as Mr B. insinuates, that the *primary* and *legal* meaning must be the same; for these instances demolish the supposition. Supposing, therefore, without granting, that the primary acceptation of *βαπτίζειν* is to *dip,* does it thence follow that the *sacramental* import must be so too? No; for Mr B. himself has furnished us with incontestable instances to the contrary, Let us then remember, that the primary etymological acceptation of a term is no certain rule to determine its primary legal force. What then must determine? We answer, the meaning is to be sought from the most probable design of the legislator, collected from former statutes, or the apparent nature and intention of the thing enjoined, that is, from the *circumstances of the case.*

§ 11. (Sixth,) We are moreover told, "That the *manner of using* water when baptism is administered, is not a *mere circumstance,* but *baptism itself;* for no minister of Christ can consider his performance of sprinkling, of pouring, or of plunging, in the sublimest of all names, as anything but the *very act* of baptizing. If the manner of using water be a *circumstance* of baptism, what in the

* Comment. Ebraicæ, sub Rad. *Mul.;* and Pædobaptism Examined, vol. i., pp. 115, 116.

† Ibid., p. 116.

‡ Essay on Human Understanding, book ii., chap. xxxii., § 1.

world can baptism *itself* be? Now, as, according to Mr Horsey, the manner of using water is only a *circumstance* of baptism,—and as, according to Mr Williams, the most eminent authors are *divided* in their verdict about what our Lord meant by it,—all we can learn concerning the ordinance is this: Baptism is an *unknown something*, which has a connexion with water." * To this I reply—

(1.) That our account of baptism is sufficiently *intelligible*, at least to any who consider it impartially. If not, sad is my case that I have taken so much pains in shewing what baptism is, and after all, my readers may perhaps mistake it for *leviathan!* which also is *an unknown something that has a connexion with water.* We say that baptism is a Christian ordinance, which implies a ceremonial *purification by water.* The proximate genus is *purification;* the specific difference is, that it is a purification by a *ceremonial* or *religious use of water.* And I maintain that the proper sacramental import of the word βαπτισμὸς, in the New Testament, is *exhausted* by this definition, without descending lower in the *differentia;* nor are we to wonder that there is not in our language any *one word* of the same import; for as Mr Locke well remarks, it is "obvious to observe *great store* of words in one language, which have not any that answer them in another. Which plainly shews, that those of one country, by their customs and manner of life, have found occasion to make several complex ideas, and give names to them, which others never collected into specific ideas. The terms of *our law*, which are not empty sounds, will hardly find words that answer them in the Spanish or Italian, no scanty languages; much less, I think, could any one translate them into the Caribee or Westoe tongues. Nay, if we look a little more nearly into this matter, and exactly compare different languages, we shall find, that though they have words which in translations and dictionaries are supposed to answer one another, yet there is scarce *one of ten* amongst the names of *complex ideas*, especially of mixed modes, that stands for the same precise idea which the word does that in dictionaries it is rendered by." † What confirms the propriety of applying these observations of Mr Locke to the term in controversy is this, that most translators of the original Scriptures into other languages found it necessary to preserve in their translations the words βαπτίζω and βαπτισμὸς, only giving them a dif-

* Pædobaptism Examined, vol. i., pp. 126-129.

† Essay on Human Understanding, book iii., chap. v., § 8.

ferent termination, as *baptismus*, *baptism*, *baptéme*, &c. Indeed, the British words *bedyddio* and *bedydd*, used in that version, form a remarkable exception; I say remarkable, because they are neither the original words themselves with a different termination, nor yet are ever used to denote exclusively any one specific action whatever, as plunging, perfusion, sprinkling, or the like. They are *generic terms*, that signify, more exactly than any others I know, the ideas conveyed by the original terms, as we have defined them. I again remark—

(2.) That what our opponent himself says on this head will help, if necessary, to explain our meaning. For thus he writes:—"That various particulars relating to baptism are merely circumstantial, we readily allow, but it is quite otherwise as to *the solemn use of water*. For if *that* be omitted, *baptism itself* is wanting."* It is a rule with logicians, that the definition and the thing defined are convertible. Here Mr B. calls baptism, "the solemn use of water;" and again, *this*, he says, is "baptism itself." We cannot help wishing that he will always abide by this definition, in hopes that it might help to introduce an amicable union.

If it be again asked, *What mode* of this *solemn use of water* is preferable? we reply, Such a mode as was *already established* in the Church, for ceremonial purification, in connexion with the scriptural design of the ordinance. And Turretinus assures us, "that in the time of Christ it was not possible for any Jew either to *speak* of *βαπτίζειν*, in reference to a sacred rite, or to *understand* it when spoken of, any otherwise than concerning the act of *washing*, *immersion*, or *affusion*."† As to Mr B.'s ludicrous supposition, that water may be applied, on our principles, to the forehead, the eyes, the ears, the nose, the mouth, &c., we think it an answer better than it deserves, when we say, *We have no such custom, nor the churches of God.*

(3.) When our examiner says, "that immersion, pouring, and sprinkling are not *mere circumstances* of the appointment under dispute," we partly believe him, and partly disbelieve him. For if we consider the term "*circumstance*" with regard to the one particular manner of observance which is actually adopted, then we

* Vol. i., p. 130.

† "Alia vero temporis, quo vivebat Christus; quo *βαπτίζειν* de ritu sacro neque dicere, neque dictum intelligere quisquam Judæus aliter poterat, quam de *tinctionis*, *immersionis*, aut *affusionis* actu."—*Theol.*, loc. xix., quæst. xviii., § 4.

may say that *this act* is not a circumstance, but an essential part of the *baptism itself;* but if we consider it in reference to a *different manner,* which, on the supposition, might have been adopted, then the using of one mode *in preference* to another must needs be a *circumstance.* For the mode actually declined makes no *part* of the service, and yet, on the supposition, *might* have made a part. What I here defend is not the strict propriety of the word "circumstance," but the idea evidently intended by it as now explained. If we only substitute the term "*species,*" all Mr B.'s reasoning on the expression "*mere circumstance,*" as "contrary to Scripture, to fact, and to common sense," is quite disarmed.

But "the Roman Catholics have been constantly told by Protestants that a *participation of wine* at the Lord's table is not a 'mere circumstance,' but an essential part of the institution; yet not more so," says Mr B., "than THE USE OF WATER in baptism, let the mode of use be what it may." Here we think our opponent fails entirely in serving his own cause. He compares a *participation of wine* to the *use of water,* as is very natural; and when we reject the USE OF WATER, then we will submit to the charge of Popish mutilation.

§ 12. (Seventh,) "If plunging, pouring, and sprinkling be *equally valid,* it must be because they are *equally enjoined* by Divine law. But they are three *different* actions. How, then, shall a single term, understood in its proper and primary sense, *equally* respect three different actions? Before Mr Horsey pretends to evince that this word *βαπτίζω* has this plenitude of signification, we wish him to prove, that any term, in any language, either *does* or *can* equally or naturally signify three different actions. Theologians and civilians have seldom taken it into their heads to contend whether the legislator had *three* meanings, or only *one,* in any enacting clause." In answer to this objection, observe—

(1.) That these actions being *different,* does not hinder their being equally *enjoined,* and, therefore, equally *valid.* The different actions are only different *means* of attaining a proposed *end.* This end is *purification by water,* to which *either* of the mentioned means *equally* lead. For *each* is included in the general term; wherefore, *either* of them must needs be *valid.*

(2.) Our meaning is greatly misrepresented in the objection. An unwary reader may be ready to think that the present ques-

tion is, Whether the enacting term has *three primary* meanings? And Mr B.'s reasoning derives all its force from the supposition. I know not that ever it was disputed, and probably never will be, whether any enacting term has *three primary* significations. We maintain, as well as the worthy author, that there can be but *one primary legal* signification; but insist, notwithstanding, that if the word be *general*, and designedly chosen as such, it is not only *capable* of two or more different *modes* of observance, but must *necessarily* agree in meaning with as many modes as there are *species*, or different *manners* of discharging the general duty, and these PERFECTLY EQUIVALENT, EQUALLY VALID.

Considering, therefore, the *general* import of the term,—considering the *persons* to whom the command was first given,—the religious use of water to which they had been *accustomed*,—the perpetual and universally-extensive obligation of the law in every age and every *climate*,—the various ways in which men eminently qualified to judge have performed the duty required, with the sincerest protestations of impartiality;—I am convinced more and more, as an accountable creature, in the awful presence of my Lawgiver and Judge, that of two ministers, one *sprinkling* and the other dipping proper subjects, neither of them *essentially* deviates from the import of the law; nay, that they are *perfectly equivalent, equally valid*. And if each answer the Legislator's requisition, what pity they, and their respective partisans, *fall out by the way!* "The honour of our Master, and zeal for His more important cause, forbid it!" I am fully of opinion with Turretinus in this matter, who, when discussing this question, "Whether in the Church of Rome the true doctrine of baptism is retained?" distinguishes thus:—"The *truth* of the doctrine of baptism should be considered with respect either to its *essence*, or to its *accidents*, such as the rites and ceremonies used therein. In the former sense, we acknowledge that, through a singular Divine providence, the true doctrine of baptism remains in the Church of Rome; because the *matter* of true baptism, water, is retained in it, also the *formula* prescribed by Christ, according to which it is administered in the name of the Holy Trinity; for which reason the baptism administered in that Church is thought VALID, and not to be REPEATED." * Again—

(3.) What we contend for, is very common in laws human and

* Instit. Theol., loc. xix., quæst. xviii., § 1.

Divine. This we hold against the objection, and the following remarkable passage, which is of the same cast:—"If Mr Horsey be right, the law of baptism is a leaden rule that will bend and take any form: rather it is *no* law—it is *no* rule; and with regard to the use of water, every one may do that which seems right in his own eyes. But as it is absurd to suppose that the *primary* sense of the same word will *equally apply* to three different objects, so it must be incongruous for any to imagine that the same enacting clause or term of a law can equally require *three different* actions, and at the same time be completely satisfied with *any one* of them. Before Mr Horsey had inadvertently fixed an imputation of this kind on a positive law of Jesus Christ, he should have well considered whether the whole history of legislation (sacred, civil, or ecclesiastical) could have furnished him with a *single instance* of such a fact. That many *tyrants* and *fools* have given laws to secular kingdoms, and have even presumed to legislate for Jesus Christ himself, is a fact; that some of their laws have been marked with tyrannical subtlety, and others with egregious folly, is also a fact; but that any of them ever were so crafty as to contrive a law which, by a single enacting term, equally required *three different* acts of obedience, and yet were so compliant as to feel themselves perfectly satisfied with having *any one* of those acts performed, I do not believe."* Astonishing language from a British divine, a Protestant Dissenter! "*Absurd* to suppose that the primary sense of the same word will *equally apply* to different objects! *Incongruous* to imagine that the same term equally requires *three different* actions, and at the same time be completely satisfied with *any one* of them! Not a *single instance* of such a fact; such a law beneath the craft of *tyrants* and *fools!*" In the name of common sense, in the name of common and statute law, what can Mr B. mean by such language?

We suppose there is hardly a single act of the British Parliament, contained in the statutes at large, but would furnish ample sufficiency to confront and entirely enervate the force of this passage; and this must be inevitably the case when a *generic* term is made use of, and left without restriction. Is not this the case when such words as these occur—to *indict*, to *try*, to *execute; recruiting, enlisting, marching; consecration, ordination, induction*; and innumerable others? Are not such words commonly

* Vol. i., p. 133.

found in our laws, without their enumerating the complex ideas contained under them in the same statute? Nor can it be otherwise, except we say that a statute ought to be a *dictionary*, as well as a *rule of action*.

§ 13. For instance; if a law enjoin that the subjects of Great Britain should RESORT to their respective parish churches, or some other lawful place of worship, on the Lord's-day, a formal explanation of the word *resort*, and the particular *mode* of resorting, when that mode was on the supposition indifferent, would be needless and impertinent. Obedient subjects, unbiased by subtle distinctions and a cavilling humour, immediately comply, without perplexing themselves or others whether they must *walk* or *ride*. Others, of a contrary turn, lay great stress on the *manner* of resorting, and speak in a decisive tone in favour of *walking* as the most *primitive*, simple, self-denying mode; and seeing infants and young children cannot *walk* to church, they should be left at home till they are able to perform this most excellent method of *resorting*. Besides, "the word resort," it might be urged, "cannot equally apply to different objects, as walking and riding, and at the same time be completely satisfied with any one of them."

If a sovereign cause a general *fast* to be proclaimed, it is not to be expected that the specific ideas contained under that term be at the same time explained. Some over-scrupulous persons may puzzle themselves about the *manner* of observing the royal mandate. It is not enough, they say, that we observe a *religious humiliation* in general, but we must take the word *fast* in its *primary* acceptation, and that is *abstinence from food*, which ought not to be partial, but complete. This is not sufficient, says another; we must follow scriptural *precedents*, and put on sackcloth. Nay, says a third, this is not enough neither; we cannot keep an acceptable fast without extending our abstinence further; for thus the Scripture says:—"Let neither man nor *beast*, herd nor flock, taste anything; let them not feed nor drink water." Hold your peace, says a fourth, ye know nothing at all; this royal order is a *positive command;* and in such cases it is not only unlawful to go *contra statutum*, but also *supra statutum*, for positive commands imply their negatives. The principal enacting term has no obscurity, is not equivocal; and our sovereign being neither a fool nor a tyrant, being neither crafty, weak, nor wicked, what can be plainer than that he means his *loving, obedient, dutiful* subjects

should *abstain from food all that day?* All *short* of this, *beyond* this, all *different* from this, is wrong; and what can be clearer than that *infants* and young children are *excluded,* because not expressly mentioned in the positive mandate?

Among the Romans, the solemn rite of *marriage* might be effected by *three different* ways, and at the same time the law was completely satisfied with *any one* of them. "We must note," says Godwyn, "that *three manner of ways* a woman became a man's lawful wife: *usu, confarreatione, coemptione.*"* That is, *either* of these three ways was PERFECTLY EQUIVALENT, EQUALLY VALID.

An ecclesiastic is *inducted* into a benefice by *different modes,* PERFECTLY EQUIVALENT, EQUALLY VALID:—"*Induction* is performed by a mandate from the bishop to the archdeacon, who usually issues out a precept to other clergymen to perform it for him. It is done by giving the clerk *corporal possession of the church,*—as by holding the ring of the door, tolling a bell, or the like,—and is a form *required by law,* with intent to give all the parishioners due notice and sufficient certainty of their new minister, to whom their tithes are to be paid. He is then, and not before, in full and complete possession, and is called in law *persona impersonata,* or parson imparsonee."†

When a general gives orders to his officers *to march* from one station to another, it is not necessary that he explain to them what he means by the word to *march,* being already well known. And how ridiculous would it be for any to contend that because the word *primarily* signifies "to *walk* in a grave, deliberate, or stately manner," the command is not to be extended to the *cavalry,* or if it does, that they are not to *ride,* but walk and lead their horses. But the *legal* force of the word is of a more *general* nature, implying "to move in military form;" and includes many specific ideas, well known by custom.

But what need multiplying examples in so plain a case? The reader may easily furnish himself with instances innumerable. All laws, whether civil or sacred, in every age and every country, from the very nature of things, *suppose* a previous knowledge of some parts, terms, &c., of what is enacted; and it is our wisdom, instead of raising a dust about what laws *ought* to be, especially the laws of our Maker, to employ the most proper *criteria* for

* Rom. Antiq., lib. ii., § ii., cap. 20; and Kennett's Antiq., part ii., book v., chap. 9.

† Blackstone's Comment., vol. i., book i., chap. xi., 5.

distinguishing the true meaning of what is enacted for our observance. And to this end, the following *most judicious* remarks, as applicable to all laws, may be serviceable:—"The fairest and most rational method to interpret the *will* of the legislator is by exploring his *intentions* at the time when the law was made, by *signs* the most natural and probable. And these signs are either the words, the context, the subject-matter, the effects and consequence, or the spirit and reason of the law. *Words* are generally to be understood in their usual and most known signification; not so much regarding the propriety of grammar, as their general and *popular use*. If words happen to be still *dubious*, we may establish their meaning from the *context;* with which it may be of singular use to compare a word or a sentence, whenever they are *ambiguous, equivocal,* or *intricate*. Of the same nature and use is the comparison of a law with *other laws,* that are made by the same *legislator,* that have some affinity with the subject, or that expressly relate to the same point. As to the subject-matter, words are always to be understood as having a regard thereto; for that is always supposed to be in the eye of the legislator, and all his expressions directed to that end. As to the effects and consequence, the rule is, that where words bear either none, or a very absurd signification, if *literally* understood, we must a little deviate from the received sense of them. But, lastly, the most universal and effectual way of discovering the true meaning of a law, when the words are *dubious,* is by considering the *reason* and spirit; or the cause which moved the legislator to enact it. For when this reason ceases, the law itself ought likewise to cease with it."* This is the language of good sense, of sound judgment, and is of universal use in its application. And whether it be not more favourable to that interpretation of the law of baptism which I am defending, than the contrary, let the reader judge.

§ 14. Dr Samuel Johnson, as every one knows, cuts no mean figure in the annals of English literature, and stands eminently conspicuous as a lexicographer; one would expect, therefore, he could not fundamentally and *essentially* mistake as to the primary acceptation of a word, than which hardly any, his famous dictionary contains, had been more controverted. And yet this celebrated author has actually erred in that manner, if our opponents are in the right. He considers the word *baptism,* and we

* Blackstone's Comment., Introd., § 2.

believe with great propriety, not as confined to any one *specific* action, as to *sprinkle*, to *dip*, or the like; but as a term of *latitude*, according to its biblical and sacramental use; and this he might naturally suppose from the *nature* of the ordinance to which it refers. "To *baptize*," says he, "is to *christen;* to administer the sacrament of baptism to one.—*Baptism;* an external *ablution* of the body, with a certain form of words." But lest it should be supposed that this account sprung from popular prejudice in favour of the general practice, and against our brethren's distinguishing mode, the suspicion is immediately removed, if we consult him on the word *dipping*, where he quotes thus:—"The person to be baptized *may be dipped* in water; and such an immersion or dipping ought to be made thrice, according to the canon." Now, if our martyrs and divines were mistaken, in darker or more improved ages, must we pronounce Johnson, so much the honour of a nation enlightened with science,—Johnson, with regard to philology, his favourite branch,—and with regard to a term so long and fiercely controverted; must we pronounce him in *this* affair, (whatever he was in some others) "a being darkly wise and rudely great?"

§ 15. (Eighth,) Great advantages have been boasted of from another consideration—viz., "That as *we allow* dipping to be proper baptism, our opponents must be right, whether sprinkling be valid or not." But if this matter be fairly examined, our opponents will have little cause for triumph, as it is evidently against them. For when we admit dipping to be baptism, it is because that is a *mode* of *purification by water;* though neither so eligible for its own sake, so expressive of the things signified, or so conformable to the genius of Judaism or Christianity, as the mode of affusion. We have, I suppose, at least eight out of ten of the most eminent writers on our side. Admitting the suffrage of these numerous voices, who have undoubtedly a right to be heard about the meaning of a term, to have a preponderation of evidence, we are *probably* right in whatever scriptural way we use water; but admitting further our principle to be *true* respecting the legal import of the term, we have the *fullest certainty* that we are in the right. Not so Mr B. For while he holds the *essentiality* of dipping, rendering null and void every other mode of using water, it is incumbent on him to prove all the Pædobaptists who hold the former principle, and among them an illustrious troop of those who adorn

his pages, either *incompetent* or *abandoned;* but this is incompatible with what he says of them, that they are among "the most eminent that ever filled the professor's chair, or adorned the Protestant pulpit." And it is worthy of remark, that by how much the more he swells his catalogue, and the more eminent the writers, proportionably will his contracted principles be condemned. It is impossible to evade this consequence but by proving them either *weak* or *wicked;* which also he cannot do without contradicting himself.

Mr B. needs not to be informed how similar his inference from our concession is to that of the Romanists, when they conclude that they must surely be on the *safest* side of the question, because we charitably grant there *may be* salvation to them in their communion, while they *deny* any to us in ours. And this condemning of Protestants, while the latter are not so peremptory and presumptuous in condemning them, is what Chillingworth calls "THEIR ONLY GREAT ARGUMENT." *

I think we may at length ask, "If the term baptism does not determinately signify what we contend for, *ceremonial purification*, we should be glad of information what other expression *could* have conveyed that idea?"

Before I conclude this part, give me leave to introduce the following judicious remarks of Mr Locke:—"Sure I am, that the signification of words in all languages, depending very much upon the thoughts, notions, and ideas of him that uses them, must *unavoidably* be of great uncertainty to men of the *same* language and country. But when to this natural difficulty in every country, there shall be added different countries and remote ages, wherein the speakers and writers had very different notions, tempers, customs, ornaments, and figures of speech, &c., every one of which influenced the signification of their words then, though to us now they are lost and unknown; *it would become us to be charitable one to another in our interpretations or misunderstandings of* those *ancient writings:* which though of great concernment to be understood, are liable to the unavoidable difficulties of speech, which (if we except the names of *simple ideas*, and some very obvious things) is not capable, without a constant defining the terms, of conveying the sense and intention of the speaker without any manner of doubt and uncertainty to the hearer. And in discourses

* Religion of Protest., Dedicat. to the King.

of religion, law, and morality, as they are matters of the highest concernment, so there will be the *greatest difficulty*. The volumes of interpreters and commentators on the Old and New Testament, are but too manifest proofs of this. Though *everything* said in the text be *infallibly true*, yet the reader may be, nay, *cannot choose but be*, very fallible in the understanding of it Nor is it to be wondered that the *will of God*, when clothed in *words*, should be liable to that doubt and uncertainty which *unavoidably* attends that sort of conveyance, when even His SON, whilst *clothed in flesh*, was subject to all the frailties and inconveniences of human nature, sin excepted. Methinks it would become us to be less magisterial, positive, and imperious, in imposing our own sense and interpretations." *

§ 16. (SECOND,) We come now to examine some of Mr B.'s strictures, contained in his *second* volume, relative to the SUBJECTS of baptism. In a note on "Social Religion" I had expressed myself as follows :—" Whatever there may be in the ordinance of baptism of a *positive* consideration, there is nothing relative to the *subjects* of it so merely positive as to be independent of all moral grounds ; nay, further, whatever relates to the qualification of the subjects is of a nature *entirely* moral ; and to say otherwise must imply a contradiction. Baptism, therefore, is an ordinance of a *mixed* nature, partly positive and partly moral. As far as this or any such ordinance partakes of a *moral* nature, the reason and design of the law, or, if you please, the *spirit* of it, is our rule of duty ; and only so far as it partakes of a positive nature is the letter of the law our rule. As what relates to the qualification of the subjects is of *moral* consideration, we are necessitated to seek in them the reason and intention of the command ; but infants partaking of the great *primary* qualification, which the evident design of the ordinance requires, ought to be baptized ; and it must imply a breach of duty in a minister to decline it. To argue on this principle, *Baptism* IS *a positive rite*, and therefore OUGHT to be express, full, and circumstantial, is, on the principles, concessions, and practice of Antipædobaptists demonstrably fallacious. For the law of baptism is evidently, in FACT, not circumstantial and determinate ; and, therefore, is not, cannot be, an institution *entirely* positive." I had also said :—" Should any ask me why, as a Christian minister, I baptize an infant, I can truly

* Essay on Human Understanding, book iii., chap. ix., §§ 22, 23.

answer, that I have the *very same reason* for doing it that John the Baptist had for baptizing penitent sinners in Jordan and Ænon; the *same* reason that Jesus, by the ministry of His disciples, had for baptizing a still greater multitude; and, finally, the same reason that our Baptist brethren have, or ought to have, and which they profess to have in the general tenor of their practice, for baptizing adults." This is the *brief;* now let us hear counsel. Mr B. thus begins:—

§ 17. "Baptism, then, according to Mr Williams, is of a *mixed* nature—an ordinance partly moral and partly positive. This to me is a new idea; for of all the writers quoted in this work, of all the authors I have perused, not one occurs to remembrance who has thus represented baptism." He very properly adds:—"If, however, the evidence produced be *valid*, the novelty of his notion is not material. His principal reason in favour of the position is: *Whatever belongs to the qualifications of the subjects is entirely moral.* But will this prove," adds he, "that baptism is not, strictly speaking, a positive institute? Will it not apply with all its force to the Lord's Supper? On this principle, we have no ordinance *entirely positive* under the new economy; because it is plain the qualifications for that appointment are all of the moral kind." In answer let me observe—

(1.) That the two last consequences are admitted; the position *will* apply with all its force to the *Lord's Supper*, and we have *no* ordinance *entirely* positive under the new economy. My opponent seems to regard these consequences as dishonourable to Christianity, or somehow a defect; on the contrary, I consider them as reflecting honour on it, being real excellences. My reasons are assigned elsewhere. (See Chap. I., § 31–34.)

(2.) The first question, "Will this prove that baptism is not strictly speaking a positive institution?" This question, I say, which implies a denial of my position, I shall now fairly examine. And towards solving it, and proving the consequence,—"baptism is therefore an ordinance of a *mixed* nature,"—I shall first take notice of some particulars wherein we *agree*, and then investigate Mr B.'s *chief argument* against my principle.

We agree, then, in our *definition* of a positive institute:—"A positive institute is that the reason of which we do not see, prior to external command, but which originates entirely in the sovereign will of the legislator." To this idea I apprehend Mr B. can have

no objection. My opponent, moreover, accedes to my antecedent—viz., "Whatever belongs to the qualifications of the subjects is entirely moral." But, as to this latter agreement, perhaps it is more in words than ideas. By *moral* qualifications, I understand "those qualifications which God, as the moral Governor and Judge of the world, requires of all mankind, indiscriminately, considered as immortal and accountable creatures, according to their various circumstances, independent of positive authority, and which are *not measurable by any positive rule.*" And I accede to the following declaration, a little qualified :—"To constitute any branch of religious worship purely positive, it is enough that the rite itself, the manner of performing it, the qualifications of the subject, the end to be answered by it, and the term of its continuance, depend entirely on the sovereign pleasure of our Divine Legislator;" in proportion as that sovereign pleasure is made known and determinable by a *positive standard.* These things I hold as perfectly consistent with my principles. And, thus far, we seem to travel the same road.

§ 18. Mr B.'s objections are now to be considered. "Many," he tells us, "are those theological writers who have more or less treated on positive institutions; some of whose books I have seen and perused with care. But I do not recollect any author who so defines or describes a religious appointment merely positive as to exclude every idea of what is moral from the qualifications of its proper subjects." Very probably; but that does not affect my position. What follows is more directly to the point :—"The *nature* of the qualifications, whether moral or not, makes no part of those *criteria* by which the definition of a positive rite should be directed." If this, in the view it is urged, be a true assertion, (for we have nothing else,) my consequence, as such, fails; if not, it stands firm against the attack. But, be it remembered, that the proposition itself—"Baptism is an ordinance of a mixed nature"—is demonstrable from *other* premises, (as the reader may see, Chap. I.,) independent of this argument. However, it is my present business to shew that the *nature* of the qualifications of the subjects, in the present case, *does* make a part of those *criteria* by which the definition of this positive rite should be directed. And to this end observe—

(1.) If the nature of the qualifications required be such as do not, nor possibly can, admit of a *positive standard* to determine

them, it is absurd to say, that the qualifications themselves, be they what they may, make any part of the *positiveness* of an institution. But all *moral* qualifications are such.

(2.) If the qualifications required be such in their nature as are *infinitely variable*, according to the infinitely variable circumstances in which the subject may be, it would follow, that none could be proper administrators of baptism, on our author's principles, but such as possessed *infinite knowledge*. But the moral qualifications of faith, repentance, knowledge, &c., which our opponents contend for, are such: therefore, the qualifications cannot be ranked as any part of a positive institute, but upon this supposition, that God communicates to the administrators what is incommunicable, which is an exact knowledge of the moral state of their fellow-creatures in circumstances infinitely variable; which is absurd.

§ 19. If Mr B. thinks to evade this by saying, "It is sufficient to constitute an institution merely positive, that those qualifications, though entirely moral, are *absolutely dependent on the sovereign pleasure of God*," the evasion is of no service; for it is in effect to say, If it be the sovereign pleasure of God, He can appoint impossibilities and contradictions. The evasive objection supposes that though the qualifications be moral, yet the appointment of *some* moral qualities rather than others, for instance, *faith* and *repentance*, is a positive consideration; that is, it is not the *nature*, but the *appointment* of such qualifications which constitutes them *positive*. But is there any propriety in calling that a positive *appointment* which neither has nor can have a positive *rule*,—nay, whose rule must be necessarily infinitely variable in its application? For supposing, without granting, the qualifications of faith, repentance, &c., to be alone entitled to baptism, or that the absence of a credible profession of these debars from the ordinance, yet, even then, such a demur ensues, or liableness to mistake, as is absolutely incompatible with an appointment *merely positive*, as to subject and mode. It is impossible for Mr B., in virtue of any *positive appointment*, properly so called, to determine the qualifications of the subjects in assignable instances of cases *ad infinitum;* and when innumerable persons assignable are actually baptized, to determine whether they are *duly* baptized or not. And while my opponent holds that as a *sacred rule*, which never was, nor can have existence, as appears from his own *concession*,—"the qualifications of the subjects are *entirely moral*,"—it is no wonder that he holds

all the Pædobaptists in Christendom as *unbaptized*. And be it further noticed, that if my principle be not admitted, in opposition to his, nothing would hinder but Atheists, Deists, or blasphemers, might be the *proper* subjects of the Messiah's kingdom, as contradistinguished from believers and penitents, *antecedent* to the institution. And whether this just consequence be not sufficiently *absurd*, and of course the principle from which it is deduced, needs no proof.

§ 20. The truth is, Jesus Christ, as the supreme head of His Church, gave to His ministers a commission to *disciple all nations*, to bring *all the world*, by all lawful means, and especially by preaching the gospel, under His government. The *nature* of His kingdom had been clearly ascertained before—partly from His own mouth, and partly by the light of preceding dispensations. His merely *explaining* to them the nature and extent of His kingdom affords no *positive rule* of conduct, but it opens and ascertains *new relations*, whence arise fresh obligations of moral dispositions and obedience. The *extent* to which their commission reached implied a *dissolution* of a former positive restriction, and gave them an unlimited scope in their work. This argued *sovereign authority*, for no other could repeal what was before enacted by Divine law. The *known nature* of His kingdom was a sufficient directory, without any *positive rule* respecting the preparatory *qualifications* of His subjects. The doctrine of *proselytism* was well known to the parties, which they could no otherwise than observe, as far as it was consistent with the design of the Messiah's kingdom, if not countermanded Common sense, common prudence, former economies of the covenant, in connexion with the genius of Christianity, furnished them with ample means of information about *who* should be admitted into this extensive kingdom, independent of all positive injunction; consequently, it follows, from the very definition of positive law, that the *qualification* of the subjects formed no part of the *positiveness* of the law of baptism. *That* is evidently founded on the revealed nature of the gospel Church, and easily ascertained *without* the supposition of external command, and, therefore, is not reducible to the class of positives. To *purify by water*, in the name of the Father and so on, was of a positive nature; but what kind of moral qualifications (and no other are supposed) were suitable for a participation of the ordinance, *needed* no positive standard to determine. Or were they in danger of

rejecting the humble and obedient, and of *receiving* and caressing blasphemers as the most proper? To say that the believing and penitent are noticed as those who ought to be baptized, no more argues that these *exclusively* are to be baptized than that these exclusively are to be admitted to heaven; and, therefore, make no part of the positiveness of the law of baptism. A moral duty may be *positively* enjoined, but that alone will not constitute a *positive institute*, according to the definition; else the love of God and our neighbour may be forced into the same rank. So neither will it follow, that because believers and penitents are represented as suitable subjects of the Redeemer's kingdom, therefore *no other* part of the human race are to be so reckoned.

§ 21. From the premises it follows, that whatever relates to the qualifications of the subjects is of a nature entirely moral; that the law of baptism affords no *positive rule* for determining who are proper subjects; consequently, that the ordinance of baptism is of a *mixed* nature, when we comprehend under the term *ordinance* the *subjects* as well as the purification itself.

Now that the reader may see that the charge of *novelty* upon my principles, as questioning the absolute positiveness of the law of baptism, or my calling it a "*mixed* ordinance," because the qualifications of the subjects make no part of its positive nature, is of little weight, may easily appear from the following excellent remarks of Dr John Owen:—"There are two sorts of laws whereby God requires the obedience of His rational creatures, which are commonly called *moral* and *positive;* it is greatly questioned and disputed to whether of these sorts doth belong the command of a sabbatical rest. Positive laws are taken to be such as have no reason for them in themselves, nothing of the matter of them is taken from the things themselves commanded, but do depend *merely* and *solely* on the sovereign will and pleasure of God. *Moral laws* are such as have the reasons of them taken from the nature of the things themselves required in them; for they are *good* from their respect to the nature of God himself, and from that nature and order of all things which He hath placed in the creation: so that this sort of laws is but *declarative* of the absolute goodness of what they do require; the other is *constitutive* of it, as unto some certain ends. *Laws positive*, as they are occasionally given, so they are esteemed *alterable* at pleasure. Being fixed by mere will and prerogative, without respect to anything

that should make them necessary antecedent to their giving, they may by the same authority at any time be taken away and abolished. Such I say are they in their own nature, and as to any *firmitude* that they have from their own subject-matter; but with respect unto God's *determination*, positive Divine laws may become eventually unalterable. And this difference is there between legal and evangelical institutions: the laws of both are positive only, equally proceeding from sovereign will and pleasure, and in their own natures equally alterable; but to the *former* God had in His purpose fixed a *determinate time and season* wherein they should expire, or be altered by His authority; the *latter* he hath fixed a perpetuity and unchangeableness unto, during the state and condition of His Church in this world. The other sort of laws are *perpetual and unalterable* in themselves, so far as they are of that sort that is *moral*. For although a law of that kind may have an *especial injunction* with such circumstances as may be changed and varied, (as had the whole Decalogue in the commonwealth of Israel,) yet *so far* as it is moral,—that is, that its commands and prohibitions are *necessary emergencies*, or expressions of the *good* or *evil* of the thing it commands or forbids,—it is invariable. It is pleaded by some that these kinds of laws are *contradistinct*, so that a law of one kind can in *no sense* be a law in the other; and this, doubtless, is true *reduplicatively*, because they have especial formal reasons. *As far*, and *wherein*, any laws are *positive*, they are not *moral;* and *as far* as they are purely moral, they are not formally positive, though given after the manner of positive commands. Howbeit, this hinders not but that some do judge that there may be and are Divine laws of a MIXED NATURE; for there may be in a Divine law a foundation in, and respect unto, somewhat that is moral, which yet may stand in need of the superaddition of a positive command for its due observation unto its proper end. Yea, the moral reasons of the things commanded, which arise out of a due natural respect unto God, and the order of the universe, may be so deep and hidden, as that God, who would make the way of His creatures plain and easy, gives out express positive commands for the observance of what is antecedently necessary by the law of our creation. Hence a law may *partake of* BOTH *these considerations*, and both of them have an equal influence into its obligatory power. And by this means *sundry duties*, some

moral, some *positive*, are as it were COMPOUNDED in one observance. Hence the *whole law* of that observance becomes of a MIXED NATURE, which yet God can separate at His pleasure, and taking away that which is positive, leave only that which is absolutely moral in force. And this kind of laws, which have their foundation in the nature of things themselves, which yet stand in need of further direction for their due observation, which is added unto them by positive institution, some call MORAL-POSITIVE."* Mr B., and especially Dr S., who, if I am rightly informed, is a *Seventh-day* Baptist, with those of the same mind, would do well to consider these distinctions *thoroughly* in reference to the *causes of the Sabbath* and the Pædobaptist controversy.

§ 22. Mr B. objects next against the moral qualification of children, which I had asserted:—"But how should an infant of a few days, or of a month old, be a partaker of such qualifications, to render it a proper subject of baptism?"

One would be tempted to think, from the contemptuous light in which our brethren place infants, that they make no part of the human species; agreeing with a certain professor of logic and philosophy who defined a human being, "A creature that could draw an *inference;*" and as infants cannot draw an inference, they are not human beings. But as the pupils of the same professor, when applying their master's rule to a *limner*, who declared he could not *draw an inference*, did not make him less than *human;* and again, when applying the same rule to an able *horse*, which, his owner had assured them, could draw *anything in reason*, they did not make him anything but a brute; so, I believe, it will never be in the power of Antipædobaptists, with all their *inferences* against infants, to make them otherwise than *subjects of moral obligation*. To deny them this character, it is incumbent on our opposers to shew that they are not affected with original sin, nor are even capable of it; for this implies, at least, a privation of some *moral* quality which they ought to possess, and therefore argues them the subjects of a moral state, and, of course, of moral obligation. Again, if no infants are the subjects of what may "with propriety be termed *moral*," then no infants are the subjects of *grace*, which is a *moral* quality. Moreover, if

* On the Sabb., Exercit. iii., §§ 2, 3. [Vol. ii., pp. 328, 329, Exp. of the Ep. to the Heb., Edin. Edition.]

not subjects of moral obligation, they are not *accountable* creatures,—are not capable of being *judged*,—of being condemned or acquitted, of moral happiness or misery in a future state.

§ 23. And what is Mr B.'s reason for pronouncing infants *incapable* of moral *obligation* and moral *qualifications?* He replies:—Because "not capable of moral *agency;*" because "morality, in all its branches, is nothing but the *discharge* of moral obligation, or a conformity of heart and of life to the rule of duty." And then adds:—"Parents may have the requisite moral qualifications for the ordinance; but I cannot conceive how their new-born offspring, for whom our author pleads as proper subjects of the rite, should be so qualified."

It is readily granted, that *natural* incapacity excuses from such *acts* as would otherwise be incumbent on the subject; for this obvious reason, that natural impossibilities make no part of the Divine requisitions, and consequently of the creature's duty. But here observe—

That a natural incapacity for moral *agency* by no means excuses from all moral obligation, for that would be the same as to say, Children are incapable of sin and grace, bliss or woe,—need no imputed righteousness to screen them from the latter, or to entitle them to the former. For the imputing of a Redeemer's righteousness, by an act of *mercy*, supposes *demands* from *justice;* and such demands being always equitable, and never requiring what is not necessary, it follows, that the infant of a day, if made the subject of it, was under some *obligation* to justice, which I presume no one will deny is *moral* obligation. (See Mark x. 15, and Luke xviii. 16, 17.)

§ 24. But the most plausible objection is:—"Supposing such qualifications to exist, by what means are they to be discovered? What is there *discernible*, that can with propriety be called *moral*, in one that is not capable of moral agency?" I had said, *Infants partake of the great primary qualification which the design of the ordinance requires, and therefore should be baptized.* On which my opponent exclaims, "*Infants*—what, in general? Of all mankind? He will not, I presume, assert it. I take it for granted, however, that he means the infants of professed believers. But there is no more of a moral temper, or of a moral conduct, in the mere infant of a real Christian, than there is in that of a Jew, or of a Turk."

It is allowed there is no discriminating moral qualification discovered in one infant more than another,—nothing discernible of a moral difference between the children of professors and of profane. Mr B., therefore, is mistaken in his conjecture, that I mean the children of professed believers *only* are *possessed* of the moral qualification I speak of; but is nearer the truth when he says, "Our author's position requires that the infants *themselves* possess moral qualifications to render them the subjects of baptism."

What I maintain as alone essential to the subjects of baptism, is a *moral suitableness* to the nature and design of the institution. What falls short of this is defective; what amounts to this, quite sufficient. It is evident, on the least reflection, that criminal ignorance, impenitence, unbelief, and the like, are excluded from all claim to such a moral suitableness; for how can they be proper subjects who are professed rebels against the government of the King of Zion? On the other hand, when we consider the baptismal rite as a SEAL of God's appointment, exhibiting to the subject the blessings of the new covenant, and thereby laying him under corresponding obligations of duty, (in confirmation of which see Chap. II., § 22, &c.,) the rite must be applicable to infants equally with penitents and believers; that is, they have all the qualification that is *essential* to proper subjects. As the moral qualities of faith, repentance, and the like, are essential to *salvation* in certain *circumstances* only of human life, so in certain circumstances only are the supposed existence of these qualifications essential to *baptism.*

§ 25. "According to him," says my opponent, "nothing is plain, determinate, or certain, relating to either the mode or the subject." He might have almost as well said that there are no certain, determinate, and plain properties of a triangle *in general,* because the *precise dimensions* are not ascertained. Aristotle's *Edita quasi non edita,* therefore, is impertinently applied in the present case.

I had said, *The law of baptism is evidently and in fact not circumstantial and determinate, and, therefore, cannot be an institution entirely positive.* That is, as the connexion shews, it does not bear the *signs* of a mere positive law; the qualifications of the subjects being reducible to no *positive standard.* Even as the command to "preach the gospel to every creature" is not so determinate and circumstantial as not to require for its due execution the aids of moral inference and analogy. And now, with

respect to the command of "preaching the gospel," I would ask whether *that* be not a part of the Divine statute? If not a part of *positive* law, by what criterion shall we distinguish? If it be, it is either *wholly* or *partially*. If the latter, by what rule shall we discriminate? if the former, how comes it to pass that the Anti-pædobaptists, perhaps more than any other denomination of Christians, are *at this day* so much divided about the import of this command, "*Go, preach the gospel to every creature?*" Not to mention the perpetual clashing of opinions about *what the gospel is*, and what is implied in *preaching* it?

I am far from thinking, however, that this affords the least room for the infidel to triumph with impunity, or that an infallible head on earth should be sought. On the contrary, I am persuaded that the more firmly we adhere to the merely positive scheme, rigidly insisting that every *punctilio* relative to gospel order is to be adjusted according to a *positive standard*, the greater handle is given to watchful infidelity, and the greater the pretended need of an infallible pastor, falsely so called.

Our author *imagines* he sees a contradiction between the above declaration and another I had advanced elsewhere—viz., "Nothing should be considered as an established principle of faith, which is not in some part of Scripture delivered with *perspicuity*," (Social Religion, p. 368.) To apply this last *axiom* to the subject before us:—As the Scripture delivers with *perspicuity* that those in all nations who are deemed by the commissioned ministers of Christ *suitable subjects* should be dedicated in the name of the Father, and so on, by the solemn use of water, it should be considered as an established principle of faith; but, as it is so *obscure* with respect to the *essentiality* of dipping, teaching, faith, repentance, &c., that only Mr B. and a few more geniuses superior in penetration to many of the most eminent "that ever filled the professor's chair or adorned the Protestant pulpit" can discover the latent mystery, it should not be considered as an established principle of faith or of practice.

§ 26. Our author is very fond, on several occasions, of charging those who plead and practise contrary to his peculiar principles as guilty of symbolising with the Papists. Among others, I am honoured in this way. "Though I take it for granted," says he, "that Mr Williams is not a stranger to the Popish controversy relating to positive ordinances of holy worship, yet I cannot help

thinking that he quite overlooked it when penning his Notes concerning baptism; because that want of perspicuity and of precision, which he charges on a positive law, is much more becoming the creed of a *Papist* than that of a Protestant Dissenter."

Since party names do not operate on my mind as bugbears and hobgoblins do on the minds of children, I take this from my worthy antagonist with perfect good humour. As to the fact he takes for granted, I shall only say, "Many are those writers who have treated on this subject of controversy; some of whose books I have seen and perused with care." With respect to the other part of the stricture, though I readily excuse the freedom of the language, I must *protest* against the charge of symbolising with Rome, as totally unfounded and unjust, if thereby he meant a desertion of those grand principles by which our forefathers were justified in withdrawing from that communion.

Want of perspicuity and precision in a positive law is Popish. I answer with Chillingworth:—"It is requisite to a rule, SO FAR AS IT IS A RULE, to be *evident;* otherwise indeed it is *no rule,* because it cannot serve for direction." And again:—"Though Protestants, being warranted by some of the fathers, have called Scripture the *judge of controversies;* yet, to speak properly, as men should speak when they write of controversies in religion, the Scripture is not a *judge* of controversies, but a *rule* only, and the only rule for Christians to judge them by. Every man is to judge for himself with the *judgment of discretion.* Now the Scripture, we pretend, in things *necessary,* is plain and perfect. If God's will had been we should have understood Him *more certainly,* He would have spoken *more plainly.*"*

One principal fruit of my attention to the Popish controversy is this, that I discovered, or thought that I discovered, this maxim as the *quintessence* of Popery:—*That one party of professing Christians make those things to be terms of Christian communion, and of true religion, which Christ hath not made so.* Hence the *necessity* of seven sacraments, the *necessity* of tradition, the *necessity* of an infallible interpreter, &c., and the *necessity* of believing and complying with all, as terms of communion. And their bigoted, intolerant principles are maintained by an appeal to Christ's *positive* injunctions.

The want of perspicuity and precision in positive law becomes

* Relig. of Protest., chap. ii., §§ 6, 11, 84.

the creed of a Papist. He might have said, the *creed* of an INFIDEL! For what is a positive law? Is it anything else, *can* it be anything else, than a law delivered with *perspicuity* and *precision*, founded on the sovereign pleasure, and enforced by the mere authority of the legislator? "If you would have more light added to the sun," to use the words of Chillingworth, "answer me then to these questions." Can that be a law *merely positive* which does not possess any such properties as all the world allows to be necessary for that purpose? Or can any portion of Scripture possess them, *in that sense* which some thousands of the most eminent characters for learning, for grace, for a disinterested freedom of inquiry, that ever the Christian world beheld, proclaim by their immortal writings and their conscientious practice they do not and cannot discover? Yes, ye Protestant champions now in glory, who have shaken the foundation of St Peter's by your zealous efforts in favour of Christian purity of doctrine and worship, ye were all *unbaptized* we are assured. And, ye living Pædobaptists, far and near, hear it, and let your ears tingle, ye are *more corrupt*, respecting the introductory ordinance to your holy religion as Christians, than your forefathers or yourselves ever thought the *mother of harlots* to be! "He that can believe it, let him believe it!"

One might be led to think from Mr B.'s insinuations and language, that *his* principles are admirably calculated to stem the torrent of Papal superstition; but on closer examination, we have reason to fear, that if one be Scylla, the other is Charybdis; the remedy is little better than the disease. His hypothesis, indeed, may cut off the *excrescence* of superstition, but instead of healing the wound, it would leave behind, as the inevitable effect, the *gangrene* of bigotry.

If the Scripture be only a *rule*, who is to be the *judge* of controverted subjects? I answer—not the *Pope* as an infallible interpreter, nor any other man, who, having "a Pope in his belly," (in Luther's homely phrase,) would determine for others; not any *Church* on earth, however infallible or *positive* its pretensions; but—*each man for himself*, as he would answer for his decision and conduct before the Eternal Judge. Duly weighing the difference between "a moment and eternity," between the authority of Christ and will-worship, let him cautiously judge, and boldly act,

as a man—an *immortal* man—and as a Christian, looking into the perfect law of evangelical liberty.

§ 27. I am further told, "I must act upon a conjecture extremely shrewd and uncommonly happy, if at any time I really *baptize* an infant for the very *same reason* that John or the apostles baptized multitudes of penitent sinners—except I can prove that a command to *immerse penitents*, is equally an order to *sprinkle infants*." Nay, this is no fair conclusion; for it is enough that I should prove, (which I think is now done,) that infants are equally *qualified* for baptism and equally *intended* as penitent sinners; and that the word *baptism* is a *generic* term alike applicable to affusion as immersion. Besides, Mr B. himself being judge, when I *dip* an infant, I *baptize* it. For, however he may be displeased with my charitable effort to *lessen* rather than increase the difference between us, I am not so bigoted but I occasionally "*vary* the mode of administration, according to circumstances." If, therefore, *baptizing* be neither more nor less than *dipping*, I have the *certainty* of at least sometimes BAPTIZING infants. And if *such* are dipped a *second* time, all the world must know they will be ANABAPTISTS.

Surely it can be no matter of surprise, that "our grand reason for baptizing infants should be the very same which is given by our opponents for immersing penitent sinners." For can they have, or desire to have, a better reason than that they act in obedience to the WILL OF CHRIST? Now if Pædobaptism be according to our Divine LEGISLATOR'S WILL, which I have attempted to demonstrate, who sees not that the *grand reason* is the *very same* as what they assign? In proportion as our practice is *right*, we fulfil the *royal pleasure* of our common Lord; that is, we can *truly* say, our grand reason, than which it is needless to seek a better, is precisely the *same* with what our friends urge for their own practice.

§ 28. "If Mr Williams, however, should at any time write professedly against the Baptists, it may be expected (unless he gives up this point) that his *grand reason* for sprinkling infants will be the *very same* which is given by us for immersing penitent sinners; and then the author of a certain Apology for Clerical Conformity [Rev. Mr Newton] will have an humble imitator." *

* Pædobaptism Examined, vol. ii., p. 67.

Well, in one respect I am much obliged to my antagonist, that he has not put me in *worse company*,—nay, that he has coupled me with so worthy a character, (as before with my good friend Mr Horsey,) with whom I have the pleasure to agree in the most important concerns. I cannot help thinking, however, but that, with regard to the merit of our respective subjects as controvertists, we are *unequally yoked*. It is of little moment in how many things I agree with the Apologist, but it would be easy to shew wherein my method of defending Pædobaptism *differs essentially* from his in apologising for his ministerial conformity.

Mr B. observes in a note:—"If the Apologist's reasons for clerical conformity be solid, those ministers that were ejected in the year 1662 must be considered as a set of *maniacs*." It is undeniable that most of those who swell the Bartholomew list were men who acted on principle; the real as well as the ostensible reason of their nonconformity was, they could not conform with a *good conscience*. Every one knows they not only insisted on the impropriety of one party of Christians *imposing* on all others in a nation a system of uniformity under pain of excommunication, fines, and imprisonments, but also pointed out those *particular parts* of the system that gave them offence. It is evident the baptizing of *infants* makes a part of the system; and it is equally evident that *this part* of it was not objected to by the greatest luminaries for learning and piety among them. Now I ask, If Mr B.'s hypothesis be true,—"that infant baptism is unscriptural, superstitious, absurd, a *daring* impeachment of Christ's legislative authority," &c.,—can we look upon these ministers in a much better light than as a "set of maniacs?" What! could they be in their right mind to quarrel with such comparative trifles as a surplice, a gown, or a band, and yet embrace, practise, defend, a "pillar and part of Popery?" But, "being loath to impeach the intellects of about two thousand persons, who suffered so much for the sake of a good conscience, I cannot forbear suspecting that Mr B.'s *positions* are an insult on the understandings of Pædobaptists."

§ 29. Among Mr B.'s concluding remarks, we have the following which deserves notice:—"I will here present the reader with a plain popular argument. We assert that positive institutions depend entirely on the sovereign will of God. It is true, say our Pædobaptist brethren, and censure the *Papists* for presuming to

alter them. We maintain that the term baptism properly signifies immersion. It is true, say they; but, many of them add, it *also* signifies *washing* where there is no immersion. We maintain that there is no *express* command, nor plain example, for infant baptism in the Sacred Scripture. It is true, say they; but it may be *inferred*, &c. Finally, do we solemnly immerse those who profess faith in the Son of God? they cannot, they dare not deny that we have Divine authority for it. The reader will now judge, from the foregoing pages, whether this be a fair state of the case; and if it be, I appeal to him whether *ours* be not the *safer side* of the question."* This is a *popular* argument. We heartily pity those people who will suffer such language to pass for argument. I shall ease myself of the trouble of confuting it by transferring the task to a *triumvirate* who are perfectly qualified to retort upon Mr B. in his own way. The first is a *Socinian*:—"We assert that Jesus Christ is properly a man. It is true, say you who boast of superior orthodoxy, and censure the Gnostics, Apollinarians, &c., for presuming to deny it. But not satisfied with this, you make Him to be God *also*. You allow with us that He is an excellent example, and has taught many sublime truths, but you must moreover make His death meritorious. I appeal to yourselves, whether ours be not the *safer side* of the question." The second is a *Jew*:—"You, Mr B., are a Christian; you therefore believe with us that the God of Abraham is the true God, but you ascribe Divine honours to one who was ignominiously crucified. The writings of Moses and the prophets are the word of the Lord. It is true, say you; but there is *another* volume which you say must be *added* to the former, which you call the New Testament. Now every one should choose the *safer side*, and we are right by your own confession in worshipping the God of Abraham and admitting the inspiration of the Old Testament." The third is a *Deist*:—"You Jews and Christians are all wrong, and this appears from your own concessions. We maintain that there is one God, who made and governs the world, and who has given man the distinguished and excellent faculty of reason as a guide to truth and a rule of actions. It is true, say you; and yet you must, forsooth, add to this acknowledged rule *another*, which you call Divine revelation; to which I may add, that many of you Christians, you Mr B. in particular, are not content with a creed

* Pædobaptism Examined, vol. ii., pp. 527, 528.

that only avows one Divine Being, but contend, often from the *formula* of baptism, that this Divine Being subsists in three personalities, Father, Son, and Spirit—*perfectly equal.* Now, surely, from your own concession, we have the *safer side.*"

If this method of talking be conclusive against our theological principles, then, and not till then, will Mr B.'s *popular* argument be a *conclusive* one.

§ 30. "According to modern custom, the *principal* part was passed over in silence." That is, on our principles, there is no room left for *adult* baptism. He might have mentioned another instance of *deviation* from apostolic practice—viz., that we form our churches of those who are brought up in the bosom of Christianity, and not of heathen idolaters converted to the faith; though I believe our opposers would hardly wish a *complete conformity* in this matter. It is sufficient that we imitate the apostles and evangelists when Providence calls us to *similar circumstances.* When our missionaries among the heathen, for instance, establish churches, their *immediate* concern is with adults; and were it not that some of these keep professedly exact journals of their proceedings, and particularly the *number* of persons baptized from time to time, we should not probably have heard of infants and children as baptized subjects. To satisfy himself on this head, the reader may consult, among others, the Life and Journals of Mr David Brainerd, which at the same time may afford him more important information and advantages. And now I have mentioned this excellent person and his journal, I beg leave to make two remarks upon them, in reference to the subject in hand:—

(1.) Particular as the account in this journal is, no one can learn from it the *mode* of baptizing he used. The only way to determine this appears to be to learn his connexions in the Christian Church. The words *baptize* or *baptism* throw no light on the point. In like manner we should consider the religious connexions and customs of the apostles and evangelists as Jews, and the nature of what were called their *baptisms.*

(2.) Considering the *religious character* of this servant of Christ, who, in proportion to his standing in religion and the ministry, had few equals on the other or this side the Atlantic, in that which constitutes the chief glory of a Christian minister,—considering this, I say, is not his conduct in baptizing the infants of Indian converts perfectly unaccountable on the principles of our opposing

brethren? For on these principles the *act* of baptizing infants is unscriptural, absurd, antichristian, &c. Now that a man of this character, so much of a pilgrim and stranger on earth, so conscientiously attentive to the *will of Christ*, so prayerful, so watchful over the motives of his practice in the minutest things, and so wonderfully owned by his Lord and Master; that such a person should be guilty of a thing *evidently wicked*, as, we are told, the baptizing of infants is,—should deliberately fly in the face of the Lawgiver to affront him, after wrestling and agonising like Jacob for hours for the exact knowledge of His will, and universal submission to it,—this, I confess, appears to me somewhat incredible.

That saints on earth (I mean such as are not *perfect*) should differ about *smaller* matters, is not to be wondered at; that Mr B., for instance, should be so far influenced by conscientious scruples as to omit baptizing children, is a very possible and accountable case; and that such characters as Mr Brainerd, or his celebrated biographer, Mr Jonathan Edwards, that Professors Witsius and Turretinus, Doctors Owen and Manton, Bishops Latimer and Leighton, Reformers Luther and Calvin, and a thousand more of the same spirit, should baptize infants, is not wonderful on *our* principles; but that such persons as these should be guilty of an *enormous crime*, a practice so *evidently absurd* that he who runs may read it,—deliberately, habitually, in their *most serious* moments, and for a long series of years, to their dying day,—is what I cannot digest. But he that *can*, let him.

We are sometimes informed by our friends, that they have *received light* to discover the path of duty in rejecting their infant baptism, and adopting adult-plunging as *essential* to the ordinance. What this bright convincing *light* is, I cannot pretend to say, it having not yet enlightened my darkness; but this I may venture to affirm that it is a *light* by no means necessarily attendant on sound learning, genuine grace, the indwelling presence and influence of the Holy Spirit, great tenderness of conscience, a diligent inquiry into the whole of Christian duty—in short, great eminence in real religion. Wherefore, being a light that oftentimes subsists *without* these excellences, most clearly it does not derive its *being* from them; though, it must be owned, they do not always exclude its illuminating rays. This being the case, it is but fair to propose a query:—Is this wonderful favour, so partially conferred upon

the children of the same family, and so much boasted of by the recipients, anything else but—*evidence* without truth; or, peradventure, *light* without evidence?

My dear Friend and Brother,—in bonds infinitely more precious than those of water-baptism,—farewell.

END OF VOL. II.

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